

# GRANT, THE MAN OF MYSTERY



COL. NICHOLAS SMITH





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## GRANT, THE MAN OF MYSTERY













GRANT IN NOVEMBER, 1879.

[Photo by Brand of Chicago.]



# Grant, the Man of Mystery

BY

COLONEL NICHOLAS SMITH

*Author of "Our Nation's Flag in History and Incident," "Stories of  
Great National Songs," etc.*

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF  
ULYSSES S. GRANT, AND TO THE  
SOLDIERS AND SAILORS OF THE  
GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.







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## I.

### TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.



THE writer of a romance of rare genius and of lively imagination, seeks to create a character the conception of which shall be the most audacious known since the world began. Searching along byways for material out of which to make a hero, he finds a little man, secluded as a clerk in a sequestered town. He has lived out half the allotted years of man, has met with disappointments, has failed in business, is without means, has a dependent family, and the future seems without hope.

A crisis befalls the land. Patriotism is burned into the soul of this shy, unambitious, unknown man. He offers all he has in the world—himself—to his country. But he is diffident, and unsoldierly in bearing, and is repelled. Others of finer speech and of more pretentious mien are preferred before him. But he remains true. Again he is rejected. Finally the door of opportunity



opens. A small command is given to him. He is equal to the occasion. His rank is raised, and eight months after, this stranger, who never loved army life and cared less for the study of war, has his name carried to the farthestmost parts of the land. He wins the first decisive victory for the Nation and its flag. From millions comes the cry: "Whence comes this man?" Hardly had the answer been flashed back before he commands the largest army in the greatest battle that had then been fought on the continent, and his fame becomes world-wide.

Again in twelve months he startles the world by conceiving and executing the most remarkable siege known in history. His name is hailed with frenzied acclaim. People are thrilled by his sublime courage and success, and amazed at the modesty and unselfishness of the man.

He rises to higher honor. In thirty-three months from the day he passed out of the shop a struggling salesman, he is invested with more extraordinary power than was ever before conferred by a republic upon a commander of men of arms. The hour of supreme victory finally comes; and the quiet man, who never sought fame, or sway, or place, saves the Nation.

In the contracted span of seven years, this hero, who never received preferment with pride, rises from the humblest station in life to the zenith of human fame. The chief magistracy of the earth's most powerful nation is thrust upon him. Earth has no more honors it



can bestow. He conquers the heart of the world, and commands the respect and good will of a gallant, fallen foe. Peoples and governments of all republics and kingdoms pay him homage.

There is a general maxim which regulates the application of fiction—that no fiction shall be admitted which seems in the nature of things to be impossible. If this maxim must stand, what about our novelist's hero—plucked by destiny from obscurity, whose leap to immortal fame is so sudden, whose achievements are so extraordinary as to have no counterpart in the life of man since time began? Can it be possible, or even probable, that the character, portrayed in the full swing of the artist's fancy, is true to the realities of life?

Has it ever occurred to the general reader, or to the average student of history, that on the pages of American biography, a character, a hero, is found, whose intrepidity and achievements in war are so picturesque and dramatic, and whose rise to fame so instant and enduring, that fiction "can furnish no match for the romance of his life"? Search where you may in fiction or biography belonging to any country or any age, and you will fail to find an equal to Ulysses S. Grant. If we reckon with his services on the field, the strangeness of his whole career, the solidity of his faith and hope, and the impressiveness of his unostentatious character, he is supreme among men.

It is of Grant—not the ideal Grant, but the real Grant—so immeasurably great and yet so human, that



I wish to write. He certainly touched more common traits of human nature than any other American; and this suggests that to obtain an accurate measurement of the man we must apply the rule of contrast; for the life of Grant is filled with contrasts probably more striking than the life of any other man in the records of human endeavor.

First the student of the life of Grant discovers the mystery of his character. We must not expect fully to understand him. We can no more understand him than we can tell with certainty why a suspended piece of steel, touched with a magnet, turns toward the pole. He was a mystery to Lincoln, and to Sherman, who, of all the generals, knew him best, and he was "a mystery to himself." It has been stated that twice he distinctly felt within himself an intimation of what would come to him in the future; once on the day of his graduation at West Point and again when Vicksburg fell. Some have set this down as an idle fancy, but whatever view may be taken of these incidents, it is quite evident that in his younger manhood, particularly when he left the old army under a cloud, he had visions of a clearing sky beyond the shadows, and darkness, and disappointments and trials of a struggling and fruitless career. He seems to have been conscious of a mission.

Possibly this may in part explain why in so many hazardous and stormy scenes in time of war, when the responsibility imposed upon him would have either crushed or discomfited any other commander, he was



able to remain composed and to stand firm, confident of the ultimate success of his army. Therefore, the simplest way for the mind to grasp the mystery of his personality, if we attempt to grasp it at all, is to conclude that through all the years when his sword was drawn in defence of his country, he was guided, encouraged, sustained by a Higher Power—or call it by any other name you please—and being so upheld, he became an unconditional victor on every field, so that no famous career in all history was more signally successful than his. There is no sentiment about this, there was none in Grant. Mentally, he felt very close to God from whom he received inspiration, but he did not expect that God would fight the battles for him; he simply determined to fight with God and beat down the enemy. He felt in his soul that “the man who takes up the struggle for truth, who puts his hand to the sword for the right, finds himself holding a two-handled weapon, and if he grasps firmly the one hilt it is as though there was an omnipotent hand grasping the other.”

When Whitelaw Reid wrote *Ohio in the War*, the field of Shiloh and other conflicts in which he had seen Grant being fresh in his mind, he said of the general:

“Such a career laughs at criticism and defies depreciation. Success succeeds. But when the philosophic historian comes to analyze the strange features of our great war, no anomaly will be more puzzling than Grant. . . . He will marvel at the amazing mental poise of the man, cast down by no disaster, elated by



no success. He will admire his strong, good sense, . . . his tremendous, unconquerable will. He will find him not fertile in expedients, but steadfast in execution; terrible in determination that was stopped by no question of cost; yet he will look in vain for such characteristics as should account for his being first in a nation of soldiers.

“Seeking still further for the cause of his rise, he will record firm friendships that were so helpful; will observe how willingness to fight while others were fortifying, first gave him power; will allow for the unexampled profusion in which soldiers and munitions were always furnished to his call; how he came upon the broader stage only when it was made easier for his tread by the failures of his predecessors and the prestige of his victories, and how both combined to make him absolute.

“. . . But after all these considerations he will fail to find the veritable secret of his wonderful success, and will at last be forced to set it down that Fortune—the happy explainer of mysteries inexplicable—did from the outset so attend him that . . . he was mysteriously held up and borne forward, so that at the end he was able to rest in the highest professional promotion, ‘in peace after so many troubles, in honor after so much obloquy.’ ”

This is the man who, by the greatness of his service, is necessarily the most eminent American citizen. And yet, many have wondered, and are still wondering, if



the average American reader—old or young—fully appreciates the greatness of his character, or the inestimable service he rendered his country. No man born during nineteen centuries of Christianity is surer of permanent fame than Grant; and the more we give his life and personality thoughtful consideration, the more profound becomes the interest in his singularly strange career. With every advancing step of knowledge in relation to him, the more we are brought into the presence of an ever-widening mystery. But while we may be bewildered at his astonishing success as a commander of men, there are certain qualities of heart and mind which need to be emphasized as we go along, for they, as well as his unmatched record as a soldier, made him great.

The purpose of this writing is not to attempt to open a rift into the clouded mystery of the man, but to lend a helping hand to those who desire to obtain a clearer conception of the real Grant than they can get from the larger books which are devoted chiefly to his military career. His masterful resources in handling large armies, and his indomitable will and sublime courage in fighting battles, excite wonder; but when we know him intimately it is his personality which charms.

I do not mean to present Grant as a perfect man. He was human like the rest of us and had his imperfections, but reading history aright we learn that he rose above the plane of the daily experiences of most great men. It was not among possibilities that the



pathway from Point Pleasant to Mt. McGregor could be trodden without a few false steps being made, and the wonder is that such a strange and eventful life could be lived in which there are so few acts to criticise.

It has been said repeatedly that Grant was born for a great purpose. And it is quite agreeable to reason to assume that no man could trust as he trusted, and accomplish what he accomplished, without such a conviction. So when the stress of war was severest, and the outlook darkest, he was able to maintain an unquenched hope and a faith that never shrank, and once and for all he set his face firmly, but kindly, against all suggestions which did not harmonize with his sense of justice. As I proceed with these pages I wish to illustrate and illuminate with exactness the qualities of this great man: his true manliness; his stern justice and womanly gentleness; his supreme self-possession, and simplicity and rectitude; his single-heartedness; his true-hearted patriotism; his justness and mercifulness in peace as well as his terribleness in war; his absolute freedom from corrupt communication; his greatness unmixed with personal ambition; his abiding faith in himself, in his tried friends, in his comrades in arms, in his country, and in his God.

In brief, I desire that the reader shall become better acquainted with the Grant who stands out in history as a great, free, independent, solitary spirit; never weakened by praise or flattery, unchanged by the allurements of honor and power, and who had but a single



determination: to devote all his ability to the saving of the nation.

Washington, Lincoln, Grant! The great American triumvirate, the heroic central figures in the most momentous and thrilling drama ever enacted by a freedom-loving people! There is no primacy among them; and the greatness of their patriotic services will be held in thankful remembrance as long as free government endures.



## II.

### BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.



THE marriage of Jesse Root Grant, a young man of industry and sturdy qualities, to Hannah Simpson, a sensible and lovable young woman of cheerful piety, introduces us to one of the most dramatic periods in American history. The event was celebrated in 1821, at Point Pleasant, Ohio, some twenty-five miles east of Cincinnati. It is now the same sleepy hamlet as when Hiram Ulysses Grant was born there in a log cabin, April 27th, 1822.

One year after the birth of Hiram, the family settled at Georgetown, the county seat of Brown county, a few miles east of Point Pleasant. Here Mr. Grant owned and personally operated a small tannery. Before engaging in this business on his own account, he worked in a tannery and lived in the same house with Owen Brown, at Deerfield, Ohio. This simple fact



suggests to the mind the wonders which are wrought by the passing of time. The second child and eldest son of the tanner and shoemaker became known as John Brown of Ossawatimie, whose "Soul goes marching on"; and the first-born of the tanner and farmer became known to fame as U. S. Grant.

Hiram (that being the name by which his mother always called him) lived in Georgetown until his appointment to West Point in 1839. Two winters, however, were spent at school away from home, those of 1836-7 at Mayville, Kentucky, and 1838-9 at Ripley, Ohio, the latter place being ten miles from Georgetown.

It has often been said that some of Hiram's early years were spent in his father's tannery, but this is fiction. Mr. Grant owned considerable land near the tannery, much of which was under cultivation, and a portion was timbered. Hiram detested the business of tanning as a trade, but was fond of farming and of all employment in which horses were used. When he was eight years old he began to haul all the wood necessary for the house and shops, though he could not load or unload the wagon. At the age of eleven he was strong enough to hold the plow, and from that time until he was seventeen he says he attended to all the work done with horses, "such as breaking up the land, plowing corn and potatoes, bringing in the crops when harvested, besides tending two or three horses, a cow or two, and sawing wood for stoves, and so on," while attending school in the winter months.



Grant makes confession in the *Memoirs* that he did not like to work, yet he did not shirk the labor assigned to him by his father. And here we get somewhat of an insight into the soul standard of the coming man. If work on the farm was irksome to him, he was cautious in not communicating the fact to his parents, because of a tender regard for their feelings.

Hiram spent sixteen years in Georgetown, and while the *Memoirs* say they were "uneventful" years, they had much to do with the making of the man. Here he laid a good foundation against the time to come. But those who knew Grant can readily understand why he called those years uneventful. He never wrote with a free hand with reference to personal matters not connected with the vast operations during the Civil War. That he did not wield the pen of a ready writer in mere personal affairs, and that there was a total absence of egotism and self-assertion in his character, is illustrated in the fact that all he says in the *Memoirs* of his life from Point Pleasant to West Point covers less than eight pages.

But the sixteen years at Georgetown were eventful. Hiram's home was the making of the man. His father and mother taught him patriotism, which never died out of his heart. He early fell into the habit of cherishing good impulses. It must not be inferred, however, that he was always an ideal boy. There were many pitfalls into which boys were often led in such a village as Georgetown, and he was as human as his com-



panions; but with this difference—he was stronger to resist evil than most boys of his class. Having a steady temper, which came from his mother, it was difficult to inveigle him into a quarrel; but if forced into one, it was said to his credit that he was never defeated.

In one important particular Hiram was highly favored in his youth. His father was a wise man in many respects, though often stern and somewhat eccentric. His mother was patient, sensible, and devout. The father's hard sense and the mother's religious instinct and loyalty to convictions were inherited by the son. The saying that "all good boys take after the mother" may have exceptions, but it was verified in Hiram. Napoleon says, "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother"; and Emerson puts the same thought in the same sentence, "Men are what their mothers made them." Young Grant was rocked in a Methodist cradle and trained in a Methodist home. His mother's love had a lasting influence over him. From his youth to the close of his life he was scrupulously free from vulgarity or profanity. He was deeply religious by nature, but apparently devoid of sentiment or emotion; and it is a singular fact that he—the most religious boy in the family—was the only one of the six children who was not baptized in early life.

The progress Hiram made in the schools at Mayville and Ripley did not seem to justify the outlay for board and tuition. He got on quite well in mathe-



matics, and read with interest the few volumes of biography which were accessible in those days, but in other studies he did not attain to a standard of proficiency. One of his confessions in later life was that the older he grew the more indolent he became—"my besetting sin through life."



### III.

#### THE DOOR TO WEST POINT IS OPENED.



IF Mr. Grant were a stern and an eccentric man at times, he was a considerate father. He had studied the weak and strong points of Hiram's character. While he did not presume that the boy could ever be fitted for great things, he firmly believed there was more good stuff in him than anyone could discover by mere outward indications. It was not revealed at the time that there were latent in his son the wide and varied qualities of efficiency and power derived from the personalities of father and mother. But Mr. Grant had confidence in Hiram, despite his often provoking failures and lack of energy and promise, and in his wisdom he carefully thought out a career for him in which he believed he would be tolerably successful.

While Mr. Grant was fairly well-to-do for a tanner and farmer in those days, he was, for financial reasons,



unable to place Hiram in any of the higher institutions of learning. Therefore, he had in view the Military Academy at West Point, where cadets were educated at government expense. He was something of a prophet in this matter, as he had stronger hope of his son's ultimate success than Hiram himself, or any of his Georgetown neighbors.

When Hiram was spending his Christmas vacation at home in the winter of 1839 (he was then attending school at Ripley), one morning, his father said to him:

"Ulysses, I believe you will receive the appointment."

"What appointment?" asked Ulysses.

"To West Point; I have applied for it."

"But I won't go," responded Ulysses.

The *Memoirs* say: "Father said he thought I would, *and I thought so too, if he did.* I really had no objection to going to West Point, except that I had a very exalted idea of the requirements necessary to get through. I did not believe I possessed them, and I could not bear the idea of failing."

The father's commands, firmly, but kindly enforced, governed the Grant home, and therefore the General was impelled to employ, in a facetious way, the italics found in the quotation.

The accounts relating to the efforts of Mr. Grant to secure the appointment of his son to West Point vary in several biographies. Even the *Memoirs* are partly in error, but this should not cause surprise when the



painful conditions in which that great work was written are considered. The subject is important enough to warrant a correction of the errors.

In the autumn of 1838, Thomas Morris of Ohio, a member of the United States Senate, visited Georgetown, and on that occasion Mr. Grant spoke to him relative to the appointment of Hiram to West Point. Later in the season, evidently early in December, he wrote a letter to Morris, the answer to which he read to Hiram at Christmastide. The power to appoint cadets to the Military Academy was vested in the Representative in Congress, and the sitting member from that district was Thomas L. Hamer, a resident of Georgetown, and, of course, an acquaintance of the Grant family. But there were strained relations existing between Mr. Hamer and Mr. Grant; and the *Memoirs* say: "Under these circumstances my father would not write to Mr. Hamer for the appointment, and he wrote Senator Morris, informing him that there was a vacancy at West Point from our district. . . . This letter, I presume, was turned over to Mr. Hamer, and as there was no other applicant, he cheerfully appointed me."

At this point the *Memoirs* are in error. It is presumable that Senator Morris, in corresponding with Mr. Grant, urged him to make a direct application to Mr. Hamer for the appointment. The father's heart was firmly set on his son entering the Academy. In a matter that so deeply concerned him, he had the good sense to forget and forgive. His asperity, so far as his



relation to Mr. Hamer was concerned, was softened, and he wrote the following letter:

“GEORGETOWN, Feb. 19, 1839.

*Hon. Thomas L. Hamer:*

“DEAR SIR:—In consequence of a remark of Mr. Morris while here last fall, I was induced to apply to the War Department, through him, for a cadet appointment of my son, H. Ulysses.

“A letter this evening received from the Department informs me that you only are entitled to the nomination and that your consent would be necessary to enable him to obtain the appointment.

“I have thought it advisable to consult you on the subject. And if you have no other person in view for the appointment, and feel willing to consent to the appointment of Ulysses, you will please signify that consent to the Department.

“When I last wrote Mr. Morris I referred him to you to recommend the young man if that were necessary.

“Respectfully yours,

“JESSE R. GRANT.

“Hon. Thomas L. Hamer, M.C.,

“Washington City.”

It was this letter, written to a personal and political adversary, that opened to young Grant the door to his great career. Mr. Henry C. Badger of Cambridge, Massachusetts, secured the original letter in 1868 from the daughter of General Hamer, then living at Mount Vernon, Indiana, and it is now among the treasures of



the Massachusetts Historical Society of Boston. Its first appearance in print was in the New York *Tribune*, in 1886.

The appointment of Hiram to the Academy was a magnanimous act on the part of Mr. Hamer, and little did he realize how much it meant to history. There was an enmity approaching bitterness between the congressman and Mr. Grant. "To the victors belong the spoils," was the shibboleth of the party then in power, and Mr. Hamer was a lifelong Democrat, and Mr. Grant a staunch Whig.

It will be interesting to the readers to learn that when the war with Mexico was declared in 1846—Mr. Hamer's term in Congress having expired—he enlisted as a private in the army in which Grant was then serving as a second lieutenant, but in a few weeks was commissioned a brigadier general. He distinguished himself at the battle of Monterey, September 21-23, 1846, and on the 3d of the following December he died suddenly in that city of malignant fever.

The pathway of young Grant to the Military Academy was not strewn with promise and hope. He had no love for military life. In appearance, at least, he did not possess soldierly qualities. He could see in West Point only a temporary advantage. The curious condition of his heart and mind at this time is revealed in the *Memoirs*: "Going to West Point would give me the opportunity of visiting the two great cities of the continent, Philadelphia and New York. This was



enough. When these places were visited I would have been glad to have had a steamboat or a railroad collision, or any other accident happen, by which I might have received a temporary injury sufficient to make me ineligible, for a time, to enter the Academy. Nothing of the kind occurred, and I had to face the music."

Here begins one of the strangest and most interesting chapters of American biography; and here, also, we catch a glimpse of Grant—the man of mystery.



## IV.

### THE WEST POINT CADET.



IRAM ULYSSES GRANT reported at West Point in the last week of May, 1839. He was seventeen years old, a good, all around boy, but not ambitious. The examination, for which he had so much dread, was passed successfully. Yet he fancied himself out of place in the Academy. What he was there for he hardly knew. He was of that temperamental type which made it slow work for him to reach a definite decision as to what his purpose in life should be. Thus far he was a stranger to mental discipline or action expressive of sentiment or passion. And the one thing which was farthest removed from him was the dream of military glory.

When Mr. Hamer nominated young Grant for a cadetship, he sent the name, Ulysses S. Grant, to the War Department, supposing his second name was Simpson, the maiden name of his mother. The name given



him in infancy was Hiram Ulysses, but of this Mr. Hamer had no knowledge. Although the error, unwittingly committed, was a provoking one to the Grant family, neither the commandant at the Academy nor the Secretary of War deemed the matter of sufficient consequence to warrant correction.

William T. Sherman was a cadet of three years' standing when young Grant entered the Academy, and speaking of the event many years afterwards, he said: "In that year there appeared on the walls of the hall in Old North Barracks, a list of new cadets, among them U. S. Grant. A crowd of lookers-on read, United States Grant, Uncle Sam Grant, and Sam Grant he is known to-day in the tradition of the Old Fourth U. S. Infantry. Cadet Grant tried to correct this error at the beginning and end of his cadet life without success, and to history his name must ever be U. S. Grant."

I have already intimated that the life of a soldier had no charms for Cadet Grant. He was in no condition of mind to push his studies. At the beginning of his cadetship no vision which vitalized his hope came to him. He did not have the eye of faith which sees the prize at the end long before it is reached. He tells us that he had not the remotest idea of staying in the army even should he be fortunate enough to be graduated, which he did not expect.

A bill was before Congress in 1839, to abolish the West Point Academy, and Cadet Grant fervently hoped it would become a law, that he might be relieved from



the obligation of spending four years at the school. When the bill failed to pass he was sorely disappointed, and writing of the occasion, he says: "Time hung drearily with me. My idea then was to get through the course, secure a detail for a few years as assistant professor of mathematics, and afterwards obtain a permanent position as professor in some respectable college; but circumstances always did shape my course different from my plans."

There are no incidents of an unusual character on record pertaining to Cadet Grant's life at the Academy. But the study of his quiet, unambitious life at that period is of particular importance. The thing that fills one with wonder is the contrasting of his standing as a military student with the marvellous ability he displayed as a commander of great armies in the War of the Rebellion.

Cadet Grant was highly esteemed at the Academy. He was kindly disposed, never provoked a quarrel, was a companionable room-mate, and his cool judgment and constant fairness were so observable that he was frequently called upon to umpire disputes among cadets. But in one thing he was lacking. No great passion burned in his soul. His habits were not of the studious kind. His mental capacity was sufficient for the accomplishment of great things, but his deficient energy kept him from pushing towards the mark for the prize of high standing in his class. He had not then, and had never afterwards, the gift of self-advertisement; and



after he got fairly well started in his studies, the best he could say for himself is in this characteristic sentence to his father: "I don't expect to make very fast progress, but I will try to hold on to what I get." Here was somewhat a foreshadowing of the bulldog tenacity which afterwards made him so famous. His constant drawback at this period was the absence, to all appearances, of military instincts and inclinations; and hence in after years he was prompted to confess, "I never succeeded in getting squarely at either end of my class, in any study, during the four years."

The better way to obtain an insight into Cadet Grant's life at the Academy—for this is important in considering the mystery of his character—is to accept the statements of men of high standing who were his classmates at that time.

Among the young men who registered at West Point with Grant, and were graduated with him, was George Deshon, of Connecticut, who, fifteen years later became Superior General of the Paulists, in New York. When the *Independent* asked Father Deshon for some recollections of Grant, he said: "Grant was not what we called military. He was careless in his dress, and did not pay much attention to the minutiae of drill. For two years we were both high privates in the company. . . . We had a good many laughs about our military cadet rank. He was at the foot of the list and I was next above him. The next year when the appointment of cadet officers was made, he returned to the rank of



private, and I took foot of the list. He had a good head for mathematics and other studies; but he was not a hard student. . . . He got a great deal of demerits for trifling carelessness in military matters which lowered his general standing in the class. . . . He was free from all profanity, and his conversation was pure. He did not drink liquor or use tobacco. One of his characteristic traits was a great straightforwardness and a scrupulous regard for truth."

Many curious stories have been circulated relative to Grant's life at the Academy, but as they do not possess authentic quality they cannot be used as illustrating the character of the real Grant, and therefore cannot be repeated here.

Another authority of high merit who is well worth quoting is Professor Henry Coppee: "The honor of being Grant's comrade for two years at the Academy enables me to speak more intelligently, perhaps, than those of the 'new school' who have invented the most absurd stories to illustrate his cadet life. I remember him as a plain, common-sense, straightforward youth; shunning notoriety; quite content while others were grumbling, taking to his military duties in a business-like manner; not a prominent man in the corps, but respected by all. His sobriquet of 'Uncle Sam' was given to him there, where every good fellow has a nickname, from these very qualities. Indeed he was a very uncle-like sort of a youth. He exhibited but little enthusiasm in anything."



If Cadet Grant were lacking in enthusiasm in everything while in the Academy, he was exhibiting a characteristic trait which was inseparable from the man. He was never an enthusiast. No one ever heard him shout for joy, or give sonorous vent to anger. If he were not an enthusiastic student in most branches taught at the Academy, he showed creditable advancement in natural philosophy, engineering, mathematics, and horsemanship. In a quiet, undemonstrative way he was unconsciously preparing for one supreme hour. But to the student of human nature, and to the keen reader of character then at the school, it did seem that between Cadet Grant and General Grant, the commander-in-chief of the largest army any republic ever organized, there was an impassable gulf.



## V.

### ANECDOTES, PROPHECIES, AND GRADUATION.

**I**T has already been said that Cadet Grant excelled in mathematics and horsemanship. The exactitude of the former, of whatever branch, gave him no trouble, and as to the latter, his skill and courage were phenomenal.

Major General Jacob D. Cox, commander of the Twenty-third Army Corps in the Civil War, says Grant did not lack the sense of humor, and though his voice did not possess volume, and seemed thin and high-keyed, his natural shyness did not prevent him from telling an occasional story with good effect. During the war he related an interesting experience in his riding exercise at the Academy.

The riding-master was H. R. Hershberger, "an amusing sort of a tyrant," and on one occasion, whether seriously or as a joke, he determined to "take down" the young cadet. At the exercise Grant was mounted



on a powerful but vicious brute that the cadets fought shy of, and was put at leaping the bar. The bar was placed higher and higher as he came round the ring, till it passed the "record." The stubborn rider would not say "Enough"; but the stubborn horse was disposed to shy and refuse to make the leap. Grant gritted his teeth and spurred at it, but just as the horse gathered for the spring, his swelling body burst the girth, and the rider and saddle tumbled into the ring. Half stunned, Grant gathered himself up from the dust only to hear "the strident, cynical voice of Hershberger calling out: 'Cadet Grant, six demerits for dismounting without leave!'"

But the most graphic description of Grant's riding ability is given by General James B. Fry, who entered West Point the year the former was graduated.

"One afternoon in June, 1843, while I was at West Point, I wandered into the riding hall where the members of the graduating class were going through their final mounted exercises before a large assemblage of spectators. When the regular services were completed, the class was formed in line through the center of the hall, the riding-master placed the leaping bar higher than a man's head, and called out, 'Cadet Grant'! A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young fellow, weighing about one hundred and twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built horse, and galloped down the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the straight stretch across which



the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were breathless! 'Very well done, sir!' growled old Hershberger."

The bar had been placed six feet and five inches high, and was the highest jump ever recorded at the academy, and next to the highest ever known in the United States.

Two months before Grant's death, General Fry visited him, and speaking of the riding hall scene, the dying man whispered: "I remember that very well; York was a wonderful horse. I could feel him gathering under me for the effort as he approached the bar."

"Have you heard anything of Hershberger, lately?" asked General Fry. "Oh, yes," replied the General, "I have heard of him since the war. He was at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, old and poor, and I sent him a check for fifty dollars."

Time had tempered the manners and toned down the voice of the once gruff old riding-master, and in recognition of his former pupil's kind remembrance of him in his shadowy days, no doubt there came from a grateful heart, but in silent tones, "Very well done, sir! Very well done!"

Although Grant's standing at the academy did not give promise of a successful military career, it was all-sufficient for the work he seemed to be foreordained to



perform. Hidden by an unmilitary spirit and an unsoldierly bearing was a surprisingly large military capacity. Any other training of his peculiar mind would have so changed his circumstances as to place him in entirely different relations to the events which ultimately moulded him into the commander the country so much needed, when rebellion threatened the existence of the Union.

When Grant was graduated from West Point in the summer of 1843, he stood twenty-one in a class of thirty-nine. Perhaps he would have stood a little higher had he not contracted a severe cough some six months prior to graduation, which greatly interfered with his studies.

There was an indefinable something in Cadet Grant which attracted the attention of a few keen observers at the school. To those his personality was somewhat of a magnet. There was a mystery about him of peculiar attractiveness to those who got close enough to him to read him best. And a conscientious biographer hesitates to quote some of the alleged prophecies made by those who knew Grant at West Point, lest they might have had their origin after he had won the applause of the world. Such stock-stories, like those about Lincoln, being easily made, are numerous. But the following incident is authenticated by General Eliakin P. Scammon, professor of ethics at the academy from 1841 till 1846:

The night after Grant's class was graduated, Pro-



fessor Charles Davies, the eminent mathematician, and teacher in the academy at the time, asked Scammon whom he considered the brightest man in the class. Scammon answered: "I suppose the brightest mind is the one that carries off the highest honors." "You are wrong," replied Davies. "I tell you the smartest man in the class is little Grant." Professor Davies contended that it was Grant's untidiness that brought down his average standing, and not poverty of intellectual capacity.

To this chapter may well be added the statement of an unknown writer: West Point, in making the gift of this one cadet, has paid back all the cost it has incurred since its foundation one hundred and thirteen years ago.



## VI.

### IN THE MEXICAN WAR.



IN his graduation, Cadet Grant met with a defeat hardly less severe than the failure of Congress to pass the bill to abolish the Military Academy. He tells us that the members of the graduating class were privileged to record their choice of arms and service and regiment. Having a fondness for horses, though his native modesty excluded any self-appreciation of the matchless record he made with old York, he preferred the cavalry. At that time there was only one regiment of cavalry in the service and no vacancy for a commissioned officer existed when his choice was recorded, and therefore he was assigned to the Fourth Infantry as a brevet second lieutenant. He joined the regiment at Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, in the latter part of September, 1843, and when the trouble with Mexico began, an op-



portunity was given him to show how he would behave in time of battle.

But there is another incident in the life of this young officer which should be given before proceeding further. It is curious how things failed to work together to meet the hopes and aspirations of his early life. Hardly anything went exactly his way. He planned, but a power unseen disposed. When he arrived at Jefferson Barracks it was his firm purpose not to remain in the army. He could not warm up to the profession of arms. He saw nothing in it for one of his temperament and bent of mind. So he resolved to prepare himself for the chair of mathematics in some college, preferably a professorship in the military academy. He wrote a letter to Professor Church at West Point, asking to become his assistant when the next detail should be made. The answer was satisfactory, and the lieutenant was hopeful. He began to review his West Point course, but this was as far as he ever got towards the goal of his ambition. As "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," so the course of events defeated all his cherished plans to escape an army life. The trouble with Mexico began before Professor Church saw an opportunity to give the lieutenant an assistant professorship, and his hope of ever being ordered to the academy vanished forever.

Lieutenant Grant's regiment was assigned to General Zachary Taylor's command in Mexico, and in September, 1845, he received a full commission as second



lieutenant; and it is claimed that he had a speedier baptism of fire than most West Point graduates. It is certain that he saw much service during the twenty months of hostilities; and is credited with being in all the battles during that period in which it was possible for any one man to be engaged.

It was at the battle of Palo Alto, May 8th, 1846, that Lieutenant Grant first saw the shedding of blood on the battlefield. He was also at Resaca de la Palma on the following day, after which Taylor's little army moved to Matamoras, on the west side of the Rio Grande, and here belongs a significant quotation from the *Memoirs*:

"Among the troops that joined us at Matamoras was the Twenty-third Ohio, of which Thomas L. Hamer, the member of Congress who had given me my appointment to West Point, was major. . . . I have said before that Hamer was one of the ablest men Ohio ever produced. . . . I have always believed that had his life been spared he would have been President of the United States during the term filled by President Pierce. Had Hamer filled that office his partiality for me was such that there is little doubt I should have been appointed to one of the staff corps of the army, the Pay Department probably, and would therefore now (1884) be preparing to retire. Neither of these speculations is unreasonable, and they are mentioned to show how little men control their own destiny."

When General Taylor was preparing to move his



army at the close of the summer of 1846, to Monterey in Northern Mexico, it became quite evident that a competent quartermaster was as necessary for a regiment as a gallant colonel, and it is significant that Grant, ranking only as a second lieutenant, should be detailed as quartermaster and commissary of the Fourth Infantry. Of course Grant was not pleased with the detail. It was an ideal position for an officer who preferred not to get dangerously near the enemy's guns; but with Lieutenant Grant it was different. As much as he disliked the profession of arms, the closer he got to the enemy when a battle was on, the more comfortable he felt. The firing line did more than anything else to warm his blood. It made him feel as if he were doing something worth while. He got the appointment because the colonel of the regiment knew that in all the vexations attending the administration of such an office, Lieutenant Grant would hold himself together. He had learned from his mother that an ounce of patience is worth more than a pound of passion; and never having used profane expletives to give emphasis to his action, he did not change his habit of being a gentleman even when managing the refractory Mexican mules which composed the pack-train.

But Lieutenant Grant was in the war to fight and not to contend with the proverbial stubbornness of the army mule; so after being detailed as quartermaster, he thought he owed his parents an apology for accepting the position, and he wrote them these lines: "I do not



mean you shall ever hear of my shirking my duty in battle. My new post as quartermaster is considered to afford an officer an opportunity to be relieved from fighting, but I do not, and cannot, see it in that light. You have always taught me that the post of danger is the post of duty."

It will be seen from this characteristic note, and the events related in the next chapter, that Lieutenant Grant was an anomaly very early in his military career. As keenly as he felt he was out of his proper sphere as an army officer, he seems to have been a born fighter in war. The whizzing of bullets or the screaming of shells was not less dreadful to him than the shrill note of the fife or the rattle of the drum, for which he had a great dislike. He was more at ease with himself in the fighting column than in the quartermaster's tent; more content to test his courage on the line of duty and danger, than to flatter himself that he could serve his government just as well behind a barricade of commissary stores. The old saying that all men would be cowards if they durst, was not true of this young quartermaster. It would seem that the idea that "courage is an essential of high character," was born in the man.



## VII.

### A FIGHTING QUARTERMASTER.



THE army which left Matamoros in the latter part of August, 1846, invested Monterey in September. The fight which began on the 21st of the month continued for three days, when the city and garrison surrendered.

“Take all the swift advantage of the hour,” says Shakespeare. Quartermaster Grant did this at Monterey. He left his mules and commissary stores, presumably in charge of another officer, and took part in the battle. When fighting had to be done it was a stimulant for him to take a part in it. It was at Monterey that he had a fortunate opportunity to exemplify his skill as a horseman. In all his military career he never neglected an opportunity to do something.

Colonel John Garland, a veteran of the war of 1812, was in command of a brigade at Monterey, and in one stage of the battle, when his supply of powder became



alarmingly low, it was necessary to send a message to General Twiggs, commanding the division, or to General Taylor, for immediate relief. Between Garland's brigade and the positions held by Taylor and Twiggs, the street crossings were swept by the enemy's guns, hence the ride was so fraught with danger that the Colonel hesitated to make a detail to carry the message, and called for a volunteer. There was never a tremor in Quartermaster Grant's courage. To be the first one to volunteer to run the gauntlet of the Mexican bullets was a natural thing for him to do. It was a diversion he had long sought for. He borrowed a trick from the Indians, and hanging by the horse's mane upon his side, he galloped at full speed in safety past the fire of the enemy, and delivered the message.

The Fourth Infantry remained at Monterey until winter, when it became a part of the army under the immediate command of General Winfield Scott, and this change from the army of Taylor, the "Old Rough and Ready" of the Mexican War, prevented Quartermaster Grant from taking part in the battle at Buena Vista (February 22, 1847), the only important engagement in Mexico in which infantry was employed that he escaped.

After the fall of Vera Cruz, March 29, 1847, Scott's army began a bold movement towards the City of Mexico, a distance of more than two hundred miles by the marching route. The first encounter that took place between the opposing forces was at Cerro Gordo, a



mountain pass, and the contest for the right of way began on the 18th of April, 1847. Scott had 8,500 men, and Santa Anna 12,000. The pass was so deep that "artillery was let down the steep slopes by hand, the men attaching a strong rope to the rear axle and letting the guns down, a piece at a time." It was a winning fight for the Americans, Santa Anna making his retreat on the 19th and pushing for his capital, the City of Mexico.

Strange indeed are the chances and changes which take place in the affairs of men! In this battle of Cerro Gordo were Lieutenant George B. McClellan, and Captain Robert E. Lee of the engineer corps, and Lieutenant Pierre G. J. Beauregard. What a mighty event time brought forth exactly eighteen years and ten days from the taking of the mountain pass! In human history nothing has been written to surpass it in wonder.

After the capture of Cerro Gordo, Scott moved his army towards the City of Mexico, and the first engagement of a distinguishing character was at Molino del Rey, September 8, 1847, General Worth being in immediate command of the forces engaged. The place is four miles from the City of Mexico; and had several massive stone buildings used as mills and foundries. The battle was one of the hardest of the war, and both sides suffered severely.

The Americans fought this battle against great disadvantages. The mills and foundries were strongly guarded within by Mexican soldiers, and the ground in



front was commanded by the artillery from the summit of Chapultepec, not more than half a mile away. The only course left for General Worth was to charge the mills and foundries; so early in the morning the command was given, and with sublime courage the men rushed forward in the face of a galling fire, and when they had reached the buildings the Mexicans were retreating to the castle on the hill of Chapultepec.

Quartermaster Grant could not keep out of the fight. He joined his company when the charge was ordered, and was among the first of the officers to enter the mills. His every movement connected with the capture of Molino del Rey displayed exceptional alertness and bravery.

The retreat of the enemy to Chapultepec made another battle inevitable. General Pillow, who gained some notoriety during the Civil War, commanded the charge which was made on the 13th of September, 1847, and which was one of remarkable sharpness and daring. When Quartermaster Grant was reconnoitering during the latter part of the day, and while the storming of Chapultepec was severest, he spied a church with a belfry. This discovery at once suggested a novel idea. He thought if a howitzer could be hauled up into the belfry its shots would reach the enemy. A howitzer was soon obtained, and although the difficulties in reaching the church were embarrassing, the little engine of war was taken apart, carried by men to the belfry, and its parts replaced. The position was about three hun-



dred yards from the gate of San Cosme. The gun was put in operation by Quartermaster Grant, and every time it barked, its deadly shot startled the Mexicans in the castle. General Worth was so much pleased with the heroism and ingenuity of the quartermaster, that after the capture of Chapultepec he dispatched a staff officer to him with the request that he report to division headquarters, where the general thanked him cordially for the valuable service he had rendered in the assault. The staff officer was Captain John C. Pemberton; and fate—but rather, that Power that shapes the coming of all great events—decreed that when those two young officers, the quartermaster and the captain, should next meet on official business, it would be under immeasurably different conditions, and the place was Vicksburg, and the date July 4, 1863.

The capture of Chapultepec practically ended the war with Mexico, and Scott entered the capital on the 14th of September, 1847.

Speaking of those times Grant says he had gone into the battle of Palo Alto in May, 1846, a second lieutenant, and entered the City of Mexico sixteen months later with the same rank, and had been in all the engagements possible for any one man, and in a regiment that lost more officers during the war than it ever had present in any one battle. And one can read between the lines of his story a feeling of disappointment in not having been promoted. He was a man of much reserve, not ambitious, never a grumbler, and al-



ways exhibited the highest standard of efficiency in the service. But he was human, and would have been filled with gratitude had his services been adequately recognized. He was made a first lieutenant for bravery at Molino del Rey, and for pouring hot shot into the Mexican ranks from the church steeple at Chapultepec he was breveted captain, which carried no additional pay and was a small acknowledgement compared with his achievements.

It is curious enough, if the records be true, that Lieutenant Grant appears to have made no deep impression upon those about him; an exception, perhaps, was the gracious acknowledgement by General Worth. But when Grant became famous, General Scott said he could only remember him in the Mexican War as a young lieutenant of undaunted courage, but giving no promise of anything beyond ordinary ability.



## VIII.

### THE LIEUTENANT BECAME A BENEDICT.



AFTER peace was declared, Lieutenant Grant continued to hold the position of quartermaster, and remained in Mexico until the summer of 1848, when the regiment was ordered to Pascagoula, Mississippi. While here he obtained a leave of absence for the purpose of making an eventful visit to St. Louis. During the encampment of the Fourth Infantry at Jefferson Barracks, previous to the outbreak of the war with Mexico, Lieutenant Grant visited the family of Frederick Dent, who lived on a farm five miles west of the city. Frederick T., a son of Mr. Dent, was a roommate of Grant at the Academy, and when the two young officers were assigned to the same regiment, it was quite in keeping with their friendly relationship that Grant should be invited to visit the Dent home, where he became acquainted with his comrade's eldest sister, Miss Julia.



A warm friendship was formed between them, which soon ripened into love; an engagement followed, and their marriage was celebrated August 22, 1848.

The Dents were well-to-do people. The bride was born and reared in a slave state, and her attendant in childhood and young womanhood was a slave belonging to the household. It was natural therefore that the family should be imbued, in some degree, with the spirit of the South, while the groom could not be otherwise than thoroughly Northern in his sympathies. But there was a lot of good sense as well as natural affection at the bottom of the marriage; and although the lieutenant was receiving hardly more than a thousand a year, and with little hope of immediate advancement, he was welcomed most cordially to the circle of the Dent family.

When the leave of absence of four months which had been granted Lieutenant Grant had expired, he was accompanied by his wife in joining his regiment at Sackett's Harbor, on Lake Ontario, sixty miles north of Syracuse, N. Y. It was in former years an important naval station, and it was here that the Americans repulsed the British in May, 1813. Grant had been so efficient as quartermaster of his regiment in the war with Mexico, that he was requested to retain the same position at Sackett's Harbor.

The occupation of the Harbor by the Fourth Infantry was brief, the regiment being ordered to the garrison at Detroit in the spring of 1849. Holding a gar-



ri-son when nothing is to be done but to perform the routine duties of an inactive army life is dull enough at best, but perhaps the most enjoyable of any period of Grant's connection with the army in those days was at Detroit. He has very little to say of events of that time, owing to the fact that his turn of mind was too practical to make much ado about the social side of camp life. Gossip, which is not worth repeating, is abundant enough, but history pertaining to matters of real concern is very scant. Mrs. Grant remained with her husband continuously, excepting for a few months in the spring of 1850, when she visited her old home in St. Louis, where Frederick Dent Grant, now a major general in the regular army, was born on May 30th of that year.

Then, as now, a regiment in the regular service had no abiding place. After the Fourth Infantry had remained at Detroit two years, and for a short time was retransferred to Sackett's Harbor, it was ordered to the Pacific Coast by the way of the Isthmus of Panama. The distance was so long, and the movement was attended with so much hardship and danger to health, that Mrs. Grant could not accompany her husband. Therefore arrangements were made for her to spend some time with the Lieutenant's parents at Bethel, Ohio, to which the family had removed while the son was at the military academy.

The regiment sailed from New York on the 5th of July, 1852, and arrived at Aspinwall (now called



Colon) close to the Isthmus of Panama. When we want a striking illustration of Lieutenant Grant's cool-headedness, never-failing patience, and peculiar fitness for the responsible position of quartermaster in time of great emergency, we must turn to his record on this memorable expedition of the Fourth Infantry. All kinds of hampering difficulties were in store for the troops when they reached Colon. Cholera was almost an epidemic. The season was excessively wet. The heat was intensely debilitating. Deaths were numbered by the score. With the incidents of those trying times firmly held in the mind, Grant wrote many years afterwards: "I wondered how any person could live many months in Aspinwall, and wonder still more why anyone tried."

The quartermaster ministered to the sick as well as provided food for the regiment. He was the busiest officer in the command, and the best tempered. In the midst of confusion, complaints, suffering, sickness, and death, he was the same patient, tireless man and heroic spirit. I know of no period of Grant's first connection with the army that reveals the true character of the man more impressively than the performance of his duty as quartermaster while crossing the Isthmus, where one-seventh of the members of the Fourth Infantry who left New York on the 5th of July lie buried. During the stress and strain of that movement he displayed many of the qualities of the real Grant—courage, quick perception, ceaseless energy, sympathy for the suffering,



and ability to deal promptly and thoroughly with every problem which confronted him. This condition of things brought out an entirely different phase of character from that displayed in Mexico. There, he was a persistent fighter; on the Isthmus he showed uncommon courage in contending with malignant disease, strength to endure privation, ability to work incessantly for the relief of suffering, and a touching self-sacrifice for the welfare of the common soldier dependent upon him for food and shelter.



## IX.

### COAST LIFE—THE "PARTING OF THE WAY."



WHEN the Fourth Infantry reached San Francisco it occupied the Benician Barracks for a few weeks, and was then ordered to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River, opposite Portland, Oregon, and while there Lieutenant Grant filled the position of Post Quartermaster. Concerning this period of his service on the Pacific coast, little can be said. There was no particular trouble with the Indians in this section of the coast, and therefore the chief employment of the regiment was the routine of barrack life.

Grant had been first lieutenant and quartermaster since the last battle was fought in Mexico, and was waiting, though not without seeming impatience, for promotion. It was not till September, 1853, when he had been in the army ten years, that he received information that the War Department at Washington had pro-



moted him to a captaincy, and had assigned him to Company F, Fourth Infantry, the detachment at that time being stationed at Humboldt Bay, nearly two hundred and fifty miles north of San Francisco.

Taking Grant himself as authority, he very soon departed for his new command and reached Humboldt Bay some time in October. Here his own story of his services on the Pacific Coast ends abruptly. He does not give a single line relative to his life at Humboldt, a period of seven months. They were, however, months of great moment, and had much to do with shaping history. But those who knew Grant's temperament will hardly be surprised at the omission.

Grant was not a Franklin in writing an autobiography. The great philosopher, diplomat, scientist, could keep nothing back when he wrote the inimitable story of his own life. But the great campaigner, the man of action and of invincible will, while deeply affected by the experiences at Humboldt, was so reticent concerning all that pertained to his personal life, that it is difficult to get at the inside history of those seven months.

Humboldt Barracks was a dreary place. To Captain Grant military life in such an isolated spot was monotonous in the extreme. If there had been Indians to fight, or a regiment to feed, he would have felt differently. But the amusements, common in a lazy barrack life, in which other officers would freely indulge, did not appeal to the Captain. He was a sober-minded,



shy, domestic man, and when not actively employed he had intense longing for home, and it seems that he had lost his grip on himself. It was a common matter for many army officers to live a convivial life in such circumstances. But it was different with Captain Grant.

Once we saw this intrepid soul displaying wonderful fearlessness in the Mexican War. We beheld his admirable heroism and patience on the expedition across the Isthmus of Panama. But at Humboldt, to use a figurative expression, he was flat on the ground. Will power had gone from him, so had hope. It does not touch the nerve of the case to say that Captain Grant ought to have braced up. The best of men are not always at their best. When chained to inertia and cramping conditions, from which there seems to be no escape, they break down.

The commander of the detachment at Humboldt was Robert C. Buchanan of the Fourth Infantry. He was a severe disciplinarian, and strong in his prejudices. He seems to have expressed no good will for the Captain, and did not at any time take cognizance of his reputable record as an officer. With such a commander at Fort Humboldt the condition became unbearable to the Captain, and his eager desire for the companionship of his wife and children was intensified. And it can well be imagined that there is deep pathos in the story of his seven months at Humboldt. The passing of thirty years had not effaced from his memory the humiliation he suffered during that period. All he has to say in



the *Memoirs* pertaining to his resignation from the army is composed of fifty-one words: "I saw no chance of supporting them (his family) on the Pacific Coast out of my pay as an army officer. I concluded, therefore, to resign, and in March (1854) applied for a leave of absence until the end of July following, tendering my resignation to take effect at the end of that time." The resignation was dated April 11, 1854, and on the 2d of July it was accepted by Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War.

We have now come to "the parting of the way" in Captain Grant's service in the old army. His resignation apparently made him like a piece of driftwood on the sea of life.

Happily there is another side to the dismal story of his leaving the army which brings to full view some of the substantial qualities of the real man. It is like the silver lining to a storm cloud. Although his months at Humboldt were a dead-drag, and he suffered terribly from the relentless prejudice and harshness of his commander, he had the precious faculty of keeping his temper under control. Under those melancholy conditions he was the same clean, frank, honest, true gentleman.

At a "Grant meeting" of the California Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, held in San Francisco in January 1897, General W. H. L. Barnes related a very remarkable story, one without parallel in the life of any other dis-



tinguished military leader known to history. The story is taken from the journal of Captain Richard L. Ogden, who, in 1854, was clerk in the office of the United States quartermaster in San Francisco. I quote that which comes directly from Captain Ogden's record:

"As I was about to close the office a shabbily dressed person came in and inquired for Major Allen (quartermaster) who had just left. He then produced a certificate for per diem service on a court martial for forty dollars; but it was incorrectly drawn and therefore void, of which fact I informed him. His countenance fell and he turned to leave the office, then hesitated a moment, and turning back, asked me if I would allow him to sleep on the old lounge in Major Allen's room, saying that he had not a cent to his name. I said: 'You need not do that; here is a dollar for your lodging.' He replied: 'I am greatly obliged, but with your permission I will use the money for my breakfast and dinner, and the lounge will save me the dollar.' So, on the rickety old lounge I found him early in the morning, and when I said, 'You must have had a hard bed,' he answered: 'Oh no, I slept well and saved my dollar.'"

Captain Grant told Ogden that the certificate was of much importance to him as he depended upon it to pay his steerage passage east. Ogden's sympathy had been awakened, and he said he would cash the certificate himself. This being done, Captain Grant said: "I am greatly obliged to you for this favor, and now I must go and get my ticket." "It occurred to me," says Cap-



tain Ogden, "that I could help him. Walking together we went over to the Pacific Mail Steamship office, and leaving the Captain outside, I explained to Mr. Babcock the condition of things, and told him that I wanted as near a free pass as he could give in the cabin. He called to Mr. Havens, the ticket clerk, and gave orders to issue a cabin ticket on payment of the regular fare across the Isthmus, which was tantamount to a free pass to New York.

"When I told Captain Grant of my success he was exceedingly grateful, as the arrangement would leave him about fifteen dollars on his arrival in New York. When I showed him his stateroom, he said: 'This is a great luxury, and what I did not expect. The prospect of ever being able to reciprocate is certainly remote, but strange things happen in this world, and there is no knowing.' "

After Captain Grant arrived in New York, he paid a visit to Sackett's Harbor, and returned to the city as penniless as when he had asked permission to sleep on Major Allen's couch. Learning that Captain S. B. Buckner, his classmate at West Point, was doing recruiting service in the city, he sought him out, and confided to him his financial distress. Captain Buckner graciously offered to become responsible for his hotel expenses incurred during his stay in New York; and history seldom records a stranger story than when these two old comrades next met to shake a friendly hand.

A few days after this incident Captain Grant re-



ceived money from home which enabled him to visit his parents at Bethel, Ohio. His resignation from the army was a surprise and a sore disappointment to the father. He took the matter so much to heart that on the 1st of June, 1854, he wrote to Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, and pleaded for a reconsideration and a withdrawal of the resignation. The letter contained this significant paragraph:

“I never wished him to leave the service. I think after spending so much time to qualify himself for the army and spending so many years in the service, he will be poorly qualified for the pursuits of private life.”

The father's heart was almost broken when the War Department placed its seal of disapproval on his request for a reconsideration of the acceptance of the captain's resignation. It did appear as if the hope of his life had faded, for there was hardly a possible chance that his son, in business pursuits, could even attain to moderate success.



## X.

### AN UNSUCCESSFUL FARMER.



HEN Captain Grant concluded his visit at Bethel, he joined his family in Missouri late in the summer of 1854. A new and curious problem confronted him. He was a private citizen. Nothing had been saved from his pay as an army officer. For fifteen years he had had a government to support him; now he must support himself. He had performed no manual labor since entering West Point in 1839. Although he confessed that he had no love for hard work, he now took an optimistic view of the situation. He was thirty-two years old, and was to begin a new life which surely did not promise satisfying results.

About this time Mrs. Grant came into possession of eighty acres of land, the gift of her father, which was located ten miles west of St. Louis. There were no improvements on the land, and neither the Captain nor his



wife had means to stock it. A house must be built—of logs, of course—and the officer, accustomed to wield the sword, now took the ax in hand. Trees were felled, logs were hewed, and a large double cabin, two stories high, was built. The neighbors had a high esteem for Captain Grant, and in his struggle to build the cabin more than two score men volunteered to assist in its construction. Of necessity the cabin was plainly furnished, but it provided a comfortable home for the little Grant family.

By careful management the Captain became the owner of a fine team of horses, and thereby he was able to put a considerable portion of the land under cultivation. To add to his slender income he would frequently haul a load of wood over the rough and muddy roads to St. Louis and sell it for cash. But after nearly four years of continuous labor, strict economy, and plain living, the Captain was not able to get beyond the point of very moderate success. He had worked hard, had improved the farm as best he could with scanty means, and the results had disappointed him. More than that, during the last year he was attacked by fever and ague, which unfitted him for the hard work that the life of a farmer demanded, and, in the autumn of 1858, he sold his personal property for what it would bring under the hammer, and leased the farm. Captain Grant fancied that if he had more capital at the time, his farm would have paid fairly well, but it was evident, however, that the business of farming had not set its seal upon him.



General Horace Porter, who was President Grant's private secretary, gives an incident which shows how little his thoughts were fixed on those touching events of his life which have made such a deep impression on others. While President he made a visit to St. Louis, and wishing to go to his old farm, a horse and buggy were ordered, and the drive taken. "He stopped on the high ground overlooking the city, and stood for a time by the side of the little log house which he had built partly with his own hands in the days of his early struggles. When being asked whether the events of the last fifteen years of his life did not seem to him like a tale of the Arabian Nights, especially in coming from the White House to visit the little farm-house of early days, he simply replied: 'Well, I never thought of it in that light.' "

The marvellous contrasts in his life, which amazed the world, seemed never to have surprised him; and he so much disliked to speak of matters so personal to himself that he seldom referred to them.\*

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\* There is peculiar interest in the two log cabins in which Grant had lived. The one in which he was born was purchased by Henry T. Chrittendon, of Columbus, Ohio, in 1888. It was removed by boat and rail from where it had stood for seventy years, and placed on the grounds of the State Board of Agriculture at Columbus. But as time and the elements had affected it, a building was erected about it which gives it complete protection. The cabin which Grant built at "Hardscrabble" was bought by a real estate dealer in 1893. In 1904 it was removed to the grounds of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and rebuilt from the original material near the Palace of Fine Arts. Since then an effort has been made to transform it into a museum of war relics, the undertaking being in charge of the "Grant Cabin association."



## XI.

### HE FAILS TO SELL REAL ESTATE.



HAVING become convinced that he could not support his family properly by farming the stumpy land at "Hardscrabble," Captain Grant went to St. Louis in the winter of 1858, and formed a partnership with Harry Boggs, a cousin of Mrs. Grant, who was conducting a real estate agency. Leaving the family on the farm till spring-time, he occupied a small room in the Boggs house which was lacking in almost every convenience that would add to his personal comfort. But he started out in his new life with strong hope that better days would soon come. Not a word of complaint fell from his lips, and joining the busy throng of the street, he quietly put forth his best powers to meet, in a philosophical way, the hard conditions which beset him.

When spring came Mrs. Grant and the children moved into the city, but not many months passed before



the Captain met with grievous disappointments. Business did not increase. Boggs was the active man, experienced in the ways and means by which houses and lots were bought and sold, but the junior partner was inexperienced, and was not a "hustler" on the street. In driving a bargain in houses and lots the quartermaster of old Fourth Infantry was a dead failure. He could not adapt himself to the cold business methods of the street.

Mr. William Rumbold, architect for the steel dome which crowns the old courthouse in St. Louis, once told me a pathetic incident relating to Captain Grant's experience in the real estate business. A Mr. White, with whom he was acquainted, had consulted the Captain concerning the purchase of a house in the city. The terms were practically agreed upon, and Mr. White made a verbal promise to take the property, the transfer to be made in a few days. Of course the Captain was elated. But one morning in the spring of 1859, when Mr. White and Mr. Rumbold were on Fourth street, they chanced to meet the Captain, and after a cordial handshaking, Mr. White said: "By the way, Captain, I think I shall not be able to take the house for the present, and I intended to see you about it." When they first clasped hands the Captain's face brightened as if lit by a sunbeam, but when the last words of Mr. White fell upon his ears, his countenance was transformed to severe sadness. He could hardly utter a word, so intense was his disappointment. Almost immediately,



with his body slightly bent—natural to him—his mind terribly burdened, and his whole being depicting want and depression, he slowly and silently walked away.

As the months passed, the Captain's share of the business dropped lower and lower, and finally the partnership with Boggs was dissolved. This made his condition more uncertain and pitiable than ever. He paced the streets of St. Louis, seeking any honorable employment for which he was qualified, but no one was found to lend him a helping hand. The world appeared to have turned against him.

There were only four instances in Grant's career when he lost control of his will-power—when his courage was gone. Faith in himself seemed to be weakest during his last days at Fort Humboldt. The second time was at St. Louis, when it is thought that he "touched the lowest depth of dejection" since he resigned from the army. It has been said that "no man is a failure until he is dead or loses his courage—which amounts to the same thing." But this impressive phrase will not apply in Grant's case. He lived in spite of abandoned hope; and lived to learn to master his moods before he could master men.

It is no wonder that he failed in St. Louis. He was not a "compeller of men." He was absolutely devoid of the spirit of commercialism. Senator Hanna once said of McKinley: "He could guide the destiny of the Nation, . . . preserve the peace of all the peoples



of the earth; but could not profitably sell a corner lot." It was so with Grant. The business of speculating or buying and selling for gain was a mystery to him. His manner was too quiet and unassuming to make a successful barterer.

When Grant had exhausted his resources in the vain effort to engage in some business undertaking, he learned that a county engineer for St. Louis county was to be appointed, at a salary of \$1,900, and for this position he made a personal application in the following form:

"ST. LOUIS, August 15, 1859.

*"Hon. County Commissioners, St. Louis County, Mo.*

"GENTLEMEN:—I beg leave to submit myself as an applicant for the office of County Engineer, should the office be rendered vacant, and at the same time to submit the names of a few citizens who have been kind enough to recommend me for the office. I have made no effort to get a large number of names, nor the names of persons with whom I am not personally acquainted. I enclose herewith, also, a statement from Prof. J. J. Reynolds, who was a classmate of mine at West Point, as to qualifications. Should your honorable body see proper to give me the appointment, I pledge myself to give the office my entire attention, and shall hope to give general satisfaction.

"Very respectfully your obedient servant,

"U. S. GRANT."

But his opponent secured the office. In the *Memoirs* is this laconic sentence: "My opponent had the advantage over me (he was a citizen only by adoption) and carried off the prize." Others, however, charged his defeat to politics; the Captain being a



Democrat, while three of the five commissioners were Republicans.\*

In after years Grant said that his failure to secure the appointment of county engineer brought on the darkest hour he ever knew. He was driven to his wits to know how to live or where to live.†

\* The sequel of Captain Grant's application for the position of county engineer is curious enough. The document is carefully preserved among the county records, and besides bearing a note of rejection, the following was afterwards added:

"Application of U. S. Grant to be appointed to County Engineer, Rejected.

"Attest,

S. W. EAGER, JR.,

*"Sec. Board of St. Louis Co., Commissioners."*

"NOTE—The within-named Captain U. S. Grant is now a Major-General in the United States Army, and is in command of the Department of the Tennessee. September, 1862."

"*Nota Bene.*—Captain U. S. Grant is now Lieutenant-General of the United States, and the highest officer in the service. May 25th, 1864."

"The hero of Vicksburg."

"Captured Richmond, April, 1865."

"Captured the whole rebel army, 1865."

"General United States Army, 1866."

‡ At the time of Captain Grant's application for the position of county engineer, Henry T. Blow was an active Republican politician, and opposed the appointment. When Grant was President a list of names was presented to him for the Brazil mission. Grant ran down the list until he came to that of Mr. Blow, and pausing he said. "I know that man. He is the right man for such a place. He prevented me once from getting the position of engineer in St. Louis. I presume he will never know, or can know, the agony he caused me to experience at that time."



## XII.

### THE CAPTAIN IN THE LEATHER TRADE.



HAVING become convinced that he could not provide a living in St. Louis for his family, Captain Grant decided to take counsel of his father, who lived in Covington, Kentucky, where his tannery was located. On that visit an agreement was reached whereby he was to go to Galena and take a clerkship in the leather store which was in part owned by Mr. Grant. The particulars relating to this matter are given in a letter from Mr. Grant to General James Grant Wilson, dated March 20, 1869:

“After Ulysses’ farming and real estate experiments in St. Louis failed to be self-supporting, he came to me at this place for advice and assistance. I referred him to Simpson, my next oldest son, who had charge of my Galena business, and who was staying with me on account of ill-health. Simpson sent him to the Galena store to stay until something else might turn up in his favor, and told him he must confine his wants within \$800 a year. That if that would not support him he must draw what it lacked from the rent of his house and the hire of his negroes



in St. Louis. He went to Galena in April, 1860, one year before the capture of Sumter; then he left. That amount would have supported his family then, but he owed debts at St. Louis, and he did draw \$1,500 in the year, but he paid back the balance after he went into the army."

My acquaintance with Grant began in Galena early in the winter of 1856. He was then on a visit to his brothers, Simpson and Orvil, who had charge of their father's interest in the leather store. Worn out by hard work in the lead mines and on the farm in southern Wisconsin, I had sought lighter employment in the harness shop of W. W. Venable, which adjoined the leather store.

I had been in the shop but a short time when one morning the foreman told me to go to Grant's and get some "strap oil." On entering the store, the only person I saw was a man wearing an army overcoat of blue, smoking a pipe, reading a paper, his feet resting on a stove. When he saw me he stopped reading and asked me if I wanted the clerk. I answered that our foreman had sent me in for some "strap oil." Instantly he grasped the meaning of this, and in a quiet, kindly way, he replied: "You may tell your foreman that the firm has no 'strap oil' this morning." This was a great disappointment to the shop force, as they expected to see me returning with a clerk giving my back some heavy strokes with a leather strap.

Captain Grant did not remain long in Galena that winter, as his visit was only to meet his brothers and to enjoy a short relief from the strain of farm labor at



Gravois. During that brief stay—perhaps three weeks—I saw much of him after the incident I have related. As he had been kind enough to save me from being “hazed,” I felt free to speak to him whenever we met, and although I was only a “cub”—yet a full-grown man—he did not try to evade a conversation that was worth while. His army overcoat, and his sympathetic face, though often bearing a serious expression, strongly appealed to me. He had a remarkable memory, and after the Civil War he promptly recalled the incident of our first meeting.

When Captain Grant moved to Galena with his wife and four children in April, 1860, he readily adapted himself to the demands of his new environment. For the first time since his retirement from the army he received a stated income, and although it was small, and the house in which he lived was of the humblest, no discontent marred the happiness of the family. Although Mrs. Grant was reared in most comfortable circumstances, and was not used to privation and disappointment, and when the Captain was buffeted at every turn in business affairs in patience she possessed her soul. She had large hope in his ultimate success, and in time of reverses she “passed through the cloud” by the sustaining power of gracious womanhood, and it seemed that never once did she fail to hold to the belief that some day she would see the victory of her faith.

While Captain Grant’s position in the store was that of a clerk, he frequently called on the firm’s delin-



quent customers in the country. An incident illustrating his force of will in circumstances demanding determination and courage is worth relating.

One of the debtors at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, had bought some goods on credit, and then disposed of them by an alleged bill of sale. The Captain was instructed to collect the bill or recover the goods by process of law. On arriving in town he consulted with the Hon. Ormsby B. Thomas, the firm's attorney (afterwards my partner in business and a member of Congress). An investigation showed that the bill of sale was fraudulent, and a writ was given to the deputy sheriff, who, with the attorney and the Captain, proceeded to the building in which the goods were stored. The pretended purchaser having heard that one of the Grants was in town, armed himself with a gun, hastened to the store, locked the door, and waited for the coming of the officer. When the deputy attempted to serve the papers a threat to shoot came from within. The deputy was confused and knew not how to secure service. The Captain watched the proceedings quietly for a short time and then said: "Mr. Deputy, if you are afraid to force an entrance into the building, why don't you deputize some one who will do it for you?" Instantly came the answer: "I deputize you!"

Captain Grant was fairly well preserved in those days and felt equal to the task. Stepping backward a few feet, he came up to the door with a rush, planting his right foot near the lock. A crash followed, the door



at once swung ajar, the Captain entered and seized the man and his gun. The papers were served, and the Grants got possession of their goods.

While living in Galena, Captain Grant made but few acquaintances. He was content to live a quiet life, and those who chanced to know him he doubtless impressed as being a disappointed man; for the bitter disappointments which were written on the heart were frequently reflected in the face. But he was not a shiftless man by any means. An impelling sense of duty enabled him to perform his share of the store work in a modest, diligent way, and to all appearances he was content, and unconsciously waiting the coming of better days.

In every condition of his life Grant was impressively sincere. He could not trifle with himself, and could not realize how trifling many men could be. He was a very reverent man, even in his darkest days, and his theory of religion and of religious living was peculiarly his own.

During the year he lived in Galena the Rev. John H. Vincent (now bishop) was pastor of Bench Street Methodist church, of which Mrs. Grant was a devout member. Although the Captain was a regular attendant upon Sunday services, and was a lover of good sermons, he never became a communicant of the church. In writing of those times the Bishop emphasizes what Grant's daily life clearly revealed: that he had little of what we call sentiment in his nature. He cared but



little for rites and ceremonies, and did not take communion while in Galena, and perhaps nowhere else.\*

He had a dislike of music, whether rendered by a church choir or blown off by a brass band. He seemed to be totally indifferent to the sweetest strains the human voice could produce.†

Those who became acquainted with Captain Grant in Galena were greatly attracted by his gentleness of demeanor, his amiable disposition, his purity of speech, and his strong manliness. He was living a very humble life and formed but few friendships, but those who came in close touch with the man found him the very soul of a true gentleman. There is a passage in which St. Paul the apostle says something about being lovers of good men, sober-minded, just, and temperate in all

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\* The Bishop says that on a Sunday during Grant's presidency, and while at the Metropolitan Methodist church the Holy Communion was being administered, Grant leaned forward to Vice President Colfax, who sat immediately in front of him, and offered to go to the altar if he would accompany him; but for some unknown reason the Vice President declined.

† Shortly after Grant became president he and his daughter Nellie, who was then entering her teens, were accompanied by a political friend in attending an opera performance. The three occupied a box, the President being comfortably seated in the background. The star of the evening was the famous Parepa Rosa, and when she appeared on the stage amid a great outburst of applause, and began to send her charming voice to every part of the auditorium, the President paid no attention to the demonstration or to the singer, but continued to hold a low conversation with his statesman friend. But Nellie became impatient, and finally whispered: "Papa, Parepa is singing." But the President whispered back: "All right, Nellie, let her sing; she is not disturbing us."



things. Captain Grant lived in harmony with the apostle's standard as sincerely and completely while a clerk in the leather store as in any period of his eventful life. In sincerity and true manliness he was unchanging and unchangeable.



### XIII.

#### PROMPT RESPONSE TO A NATION'S CALL.



HEN the shot was fired on Sumter, on April 12th, 1861, two-thirds of Captain Grant's life had passed away. Up to this time his credits on life's ledger were faithful service in the old army, a patriotic spirit, health, character, and love for his family. He was passing through what seemed to be an aimless period of life, when the Nation's call aroused the quiet man to action. Nothing less than an event like that of the firing on Sumter could have stirred up the gift which was within him.

Those who have read the *Memoirs* will probably remember the statement that he was called to preside at a war meeting, and that after it had been organized, Elihu B. Washburne, member of Congress from the Galena district, entered the courtroom, and being called upon to speak, expressed "a little surprise that Galena could not furnish a presiding officer for such an occa-



sion without taking a stranger." It is true that Mr. Washburne had not known Captain Grant personally, and the quotation requires an explanation.

There were two war meetings held in Galena: the first on the 16th of April, the presiding officer of which was the mayor of the town, whose address was so lacking in patriotic enthusiasm that another meeting was called for the 18th, and at the suggestion of Mr. Washburne—who in the meantime had learned something of Captain Grant—he was called to the chair. The first to volunteer was Augustus L. Chetlain, a merchant, who rose to the rank of brevet major-general during the Civil War. Captain Grant did not enlist, but aided in the work of recruiting. When the company was full the captaincy was offered to Grant, but having been a captain in the regular army, he declined on the ground that he was entitled to a higher position in the volunteer service. Mr. Chetlain was elected captain, and Captain Grant superintended the work of uniforming the company, and frequently assisted in drilling the men.

The company departed for Springfield on the 25th of April, and Captain Grant, with "a small carpetbag in hand, and very plainly, if not poorly, clad in citizens' clothes," marched with the men to the railway station. It was his purpose to go with the company to Springfield and tender his services to the state; and to aid him in this design, Mr. Washburne gave him a letter of introduction to Governor Richard Yates. On the afternoon of his departure, Mr. Vincent delivered a stirring



farewell address to the company, and then called upon Mrs. Grant to express the hope that her husband might be spared from all harm and restored to his family. I have stated in the preceding chapter that in all the years of the Captain's failures, disappointments, and financial want, Mrs. Grant was a brave, patient, and cheerful woman, and her instant answer to the pastor was: "Dear me, I hope he will get to be a major general, or something big!"

There were many politicians at the state capital seeking special positions in the volunteer service for either themselves or their friends. The impelling influence among them was even more political than patriotic. Therefore, when Captain Grant presented the Washburne letter to the Governor, his reception was so cold as to cause him painful surprise and disappointment. The natural Grant was not a striking personality; and his bearing was not that of a trained soldier. His enthusiasm for the Union was not of the fitful, spasmodic, flash-in-the-pan sort. But he had the ornament of a sincere, diffident, quiet spirit. He had much in reserve. A quaint old minister was once asked what he thought of the attainments of his two sons, who were both preachers. "Well," he said, "George has a better show in his window than John, but John has a larger stock in his warehouse." The Captain, before the governor and politicians at Springfield, was John of the anecdote.

Grant, not having acquired the habit of talking



much about himself, made a poor impression in the presence of Governor Yates. One of the laws of his life was not to boast of his thrilling experiences in the old army. This was to his detriment at this particular time. But this was the natural man—one of the mysteries of his character.

The Governor did not seem to be influenced in the Captain's favor by Mr. Washburne's letter. He looked at it with apparent indifference, and said that he knew of nothing he could give him then, but referred him to the adjutant-general of the state. The Captain called on that official the following day, and was informed, in a cold sort of way, that he knew of no employment which could be given him unless it was some clerical work in the office at two dollars a day.

Captain Grant's patience and courage were tested to the limit by this strange treatment. But he was a patriot, and for the time being, a common clerk. In a few days, however, Captain Chetlain observed that the Captain's spirits began to droop. He was mortified, as any soldier of his character and record would have been, in being set to do such work; and one day he said to Chetlain: "I am going back to the store to-night. I am of no use here. You have boys in your company who can do this work." But he was urged to remain a few days longer, which he reluctantly decided to do. When the Twelfth Illinois Infantry was organized, Captain Chetlain endeavored to secure the colonelcy for Grant, but "a prominent and influential politician who aspired



to the place strenuously opposed Grant, on the ground that an officer who had been compelled to leave the army on account of his habits was not a safe man to be intrusted with the command of a regiment." "I found it impossible," continues Chetlain, "to overcome this objection, and Grant's name was dropped."

Again Captain Grant was engulfed in disappointment. His hope was almost buried in the grave of despair. He did not nurse morbid feelings—they were forced upon him by conditions he could not control; and for the third time in his life he lost his tenacity of will. There was latent power enough in the man to turn the stream of history into a new channel, but for the time he could not overcome the machinations of self-asserting politicians.

It was a happy deliverance from his immediate troubles that Captain Grant was persuaded by his friend Chetlain (who in the meantime had been appointed lieutenant-colonel of the Twelfth Infantry) not to make a hasty return to Galena, for on the 4th of May he was appointed to take charge of Camp Yates, where several regiments were gathered. The camp was in a chaotic state, but Captain Grant, having been a successful quartermaster, soon placed it in an orderly condition.

On the 8th of May he was appointed mustering officer—a slight promotion—and after organizing several regiments in various parts of the state, he went to St. Louis to consult Captain Nathaniel Lyon, with whom he



was acquainted at West Point, and who was then commandant at the government arsenal. But his old army friend could find nothing for him, and, departing for Springfield, he called at Caseyville, where the Twelfth was stationed. Colonel Chetlain says: "The Captain was again depressed in spirits, and seemed to feel keenly his lack of success in obtaining some suitable appointment in the volunteer service. During his visit he more than once alluded to the singular fact that an educated military man who had seen service could not get a position in the volunteer army, when civilians, without military education or experience, could easily obtain them."

When the Captain reached Springfield he was ordered, on the 15th of May, to muster in the Twenty-first Illinois at Mattoon; and there being nothing more for him to do, he returned to Galena. Seeing no immediate prospect of having his services accepted by the state, Captain Grant wrote a letter to the War Department at Washington, tendering his services to the country. The letter was dated at Galena, May 24th, 1861, and after reciting, in a brief way, his military record, he stated that he felt competent to command a regiment if the President should see fit to intrust one to him.

Captain Grant never received an answer to that letter. It had been misplaced in the war office, and was not found until many months afterwards. He confesses that he had some hesitation in applying for a



coloneley, as he really doubted whether he would be equal to the demands of the position, but his courage to make the application was strengthened when he saw the kind of material out of which colonels were being rapidly made in Illinois and Indiana.

When no word came from Washington, one might well believe that Captain Grant had almost lost faith in Longfellow's line:

"All things come round to him who will but wait."

He had waited till his heart grew heavy; but finally he concluded to try again. He had known General McClellan at West Point and in Mexico, and as McClellan had been recently appointed major-general, with headquarters at Cincinnati, the Captain decided to call upon him, hoping that he would offer him a staff appointment. He called at headquarters on two successive days, and when he asked for the General, the answer was, "He has just gone out." Each day the same story, "Just gone out." The Captain could no longer endure the wearisomeness of delay, and retired from the scene.

It is but fair to give McClellan's version of this incident, found in *My Own Story*, in which he says: "I think it was during my absence on a trip to Indianapolis that Grant came to Cincinnati to ask me, as an old acquaintance, to give him employment, or a place on my staff. Marcy, or Seth Williams, saw him and told him that if he would await my return, doubtless I would do something for him; but before I got back he telegraphed



that he could have a regiment in Illinois, and at once returned thither, so I did not see him. This was his good luck; for had I been there I would have no doubt given him a place on my staff, and he would probably have remained with me and shared my fate."

It was near the middle of June, 1861, when common sense at the executive office at Springfield got a chance to reach its own conclusion. The Governor appointed Captain Grant colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois—a regiment made up of good material, but which had become demoralized while under command of an incompetent colonel at Springfield. Originally it was a thirty-day regiment, but with the appointment of Grant as colonel it became a part of the three-year forces.

When Grant went to Springfield to take command of the regiment, he found it in a state of insubordination; and General John E. Smith of Galena tells of Grant's first visit to his command:

"I went with him to camp, and shall never forget the scene when his men first saw him. Grant was dressed in citizen's clothes, an old coat worn out at the elbows, and a badly damaged hat. His men, though ragged and barefooted themselves, had formed a high estimate of what a colonel should be, and when Grant walked in among them they began making fun of him. They cried in derision, 'What a colonel!' and made all sorts of fun of him. And one of them, to show off to the others, got behind his back and commenced sparring at him, and while he was doing this another gave him such a push that he hit Grant between the shoulders."

But this rebellious spirit did not continue long



after Grant took command. He was not a severe disciplinarian, but judiciously strict, and when the regiment got to know and understand the Colonel, it was classed among the best sent to the front from Illinois.

General Chetlain says that Mr. E. A. Collins of Galena, formerly the junior member of the firm of Jesse R. Grant & Co., hearing that the Colonel was in much need of money, quietly sent him four hundred dollars, and with this amount Colonel Grant equipped himself in a manner befitting the commander of a regiment.

After years of hard weather, the clouds are breaking. The frowns of Fortune are on the wane. The door of opportunity is ajar. A forward movement is begun, and not a step backward is ever again to be taken. The lesson of terrible experience is deeply burned in the soul. The silent, mysterious man has mastered fate. He nerves himself for the vigorous years, the mighty responsibilities, and the great achievements which are to follow.



## XIV.

### MARCHING TO THE FRONT.



COLONEL GRANT was now in the saddle. For the first time in his military career he was given an opportunity to lead a force into action. His regiment became thoroughly drilled. The men stood by him and for him, and were ready for the field.

On the 3d of July, 1861, Colonel Grant was ordered to take his regiment to Quincy, Illinois, one hundred miles west from Springfield. In three weeks after he was commissioned Colonel we have an illustration of the real Grant in wartime. The railway facilities between the two cities were deficient, but instead of grumbling about the deficiency in transportation, he turned it to good account. He decided to march his men to the banks of the Mississippi and hire wagons to carry tents and rations. Of course no colonel who went in the war for glory would ever think of doing such a thing



as that. But Colonel Grant was wise, as making the one hundred miles or more on foot would give the regiment a valuable lesson in the business of marching.

The march was begun on the 3d of July and an easy distance was made each day. But when the Illinois river was reached, Colonel Grant was ordered to take cars for Quincy, and proceed with all possible haste to Palmyra, Missouri, where an Illinois regiment was thought to be surrounded by Confederates; but before Palmyra could be reached all danger had passed, and the Colonel thought that both sides got frightened and ran away." A few days later Colonel Grant was ordered to Florida, a little town held by Colonel Thomas Harris with a regiment of Confederates. When the Colonel got in view of the enemy's camp, and realized what was expected of him, he says that his heart kept getting higher and higher until it felt as though it was in his throat. This was the first time in his military career that he was compelled to fight his own battle. He was oppressed by the responsibility: "I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on. . . . My heart then resumed its place. It occurred to me that Colonel Harris had been as much afraid of me as I was of him. . . . From that event to the close of the war I never experienced trepidation, though I was more or less anxious. I never forgot that the enemy had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his."



Shortly after this incident, Colonel Grant was ordered by General Pope—commanding the District of Missouri—to move his regiment to Mexico, in that state, and to assume command of the several regiments in that immediate locality. He had been there but a few weeks when he learned that he had been appointed Brigadier-General, with six other colonels from Illinois. General Grant was given command of the district embracing southeastern Missouri and southern Illinois; and on the 4th of September, 1861, he established his headquarters at Cairo, the post then being commanded by Colonel Richard Oglesby, later Governor of Illinois and United States Senator.

General Grant could no more throw aside his modesty than he could lose his temper. When he reached Cairo he was in citizen's dress, his brigadier's uniform not having been received. He had never met Colonel Oglesby, and when he went to his headquarters he found the rooms full of people "making complaints or asking favors." When General Grant introduced himself, in his habitually quiet voice, it seems that the Colonel did not understand the name clearly, and, supposing him to be a stranger who wanted some favor, he paid little attention to him. As Colonel Oglesby was a dignified looking man, and uniformed according to his rank, there was a striking difference in the appearance of the two men. But Grant was not abashed by this dissimilarity. He took a place at a table, reached for a piece of paper on which he wrote an order assuming command of that



district, and assigning Colonel Oglesby to the post of Bird's Point. When this order was handed to him, Grant says: "He put on an expression of surprise that looked as if he would like to have someone identify me." It is marvellous how rapidly General Grant made history from this time on.

Here is an illustration: General Grant had been in Cairo but one day when he learned from one of General Fremont's scouts that a force of Confederates had started from Columbus—twenty miles below on the Mississippi—for the purpose of occupying Paducah, then a town of 8,000, at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers. The holding of the town by the Confederates would have been a severe blow to the cause of the Union in Kentucky. Paducah was the key of the West. General Grant, with his keen military eye, saw this clearly. Also, he was aware of the fact that if Union troops were to hold the city, action must be prompt. Twice he telegraphed the situation of affairs to General Fremont at St. Louis, but received no answer. He then determined to assume the responsibility of moving on Paducah, forty-five miles from Cairo. Troops were embarked on transports with all possible haste, and under the cover of night steamed up the river and reached their destination about daylight. Had General Grant spent another half day in dallying with Fremont, Paducah would have been held and fortified by the Confederates, for 4,000 troops were within a few hours' march of the town.





GRANT AS BRIGADIER GENERAL.

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1861.

[Copied from the original photograph, loaned by General  
Frederick D. Grant.]







Of course there was consternation among the people when General Grant's army of eighteen hundred men, with the necessary cannon, took possession of the town. They were fearful of trouble. But the General soon calmed their fears. With a military head and a military hand he everywhere evoked order out of chaos. He issued a printed proclamation to the citizens, assuring them "of our peaceful intention, that we had come among them to protect them against the enemies of our country, and all who chose could continue their usual avocations with the assurance of the protection of the government."

A campaign for the Union began early in Kentucky. The most persuasive orators and the ablest pens were employed to save the state to the Union. President Lincoln took a deep interest in the matter. From the very depth of his soul there came a plea that Kentucky must not be precipitated into secession. Earnestly and tenderly he clung to the state that gave him birth. And when General Grant's proclamation was published, the President said: "The modesty and brevity of that address show that the officer issuing it understands the situation, and is the proper man to command there at this time." It was not the proclamation of a warrior, but the sympathetic appeal of a friend, a patriot, and a statesman. James G. Blaine says that the taking of Paducah by General Grant was the first important step in the military career "which fills the most brilliant pages in the military annals of our country."



It was this perfect self-reliance, always manifested in General Grant, which, perhaps, gave him a touch of the feeling that he was the man born for the occasion; and hence, without orders from any superior, he made a movement in the nick of time to outwit the Confederates in their purpose to hold Paducah. A delay of only a few hours would have lost that important post to the Union.



## XV.

### GRANT'S FIRST BATTLE.



GENERAL GRANT made no delay in properly reinforcing Paducah. The command of the post was given to General Charles F. Smith, who held the positions of adjutant and commandant at West Point during Grant's term as a cadet.

On his return to Cairo, General Grant found a dispatch from the department headquarters which gave him permission to take Paducah "if he felt strong enough." One of the interesting features of his military career was that he rarely ever mismeasured his strength. Before the department commander at St. Louis could decide what to do about Paducah, General Grant had seen his opportunity, and moved immediately upon the town, and thereby made the Union forces master of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers. It was the original aim of Kentucky to preserve a position of neutrality in the



impending contest; but the Confederates were the first to violate it. And on the heel of the dispatch giving General Grant permission to take Paducah if he felt strong enough, came another from the same source reprimanding him for so hastily placing the town under Federal authority! Evidently, on second thought, Fremont concluded that General Grant had violated the neutrality agreement, and then began to blow hot and cold in regard to the affair.

For two months after the timely occupation of Paducah, little was done in General Grant's department. Shortly after giving that important post the protection of Union forces, he asked permission to drive the Confederates out of Columbus and securely fortify that commanding position, but consent was refused, and this piece of stupidity on the part of General Fremont gave the enemy an opportunity to fortify the town so as to make it difficult of capture should it have been deemed advisable later on to move against it.

It is not essential to enter into all the details which led up to General Grant's first battle. General Fremont was in Missouri, striving to take care of General Sterling Price, who had an army of considerable size for that period of the war. He was still looking to Columbus for reinforcements. To prevent forces from being sent from Columbus to Missouri, General Grant ordered General Smith to take such troops as he could spare from Paducah, and make a sufficient demonstration in the rear of the "Gibraltar of the West," to alarm



the enemy. Grant decided to supplement this movement by moving by boat down the river three thousand one hundred men, embracing five regiments of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, and two pieces of artillery. It was his purpose to make only a feint against Columbus, for he was too good a soldier to begin a fight which he knew would certainly end in his defeat.

This movement was made on Wednesday evening, November, 6th, 1861, and about two o'clock Thursday morning Grant learned that Confederate troops were crossing the river from Columbus, doubtless to intercept Colonel Oglesby, who had gone into Missouri after that roaming bandit, Jeff. Thompson. General Grant knew of a Confederate camp at Belmont, and wishing to make havoc of it, he quickly decided to move upon it and immediately return to Cairo. The camp was located on low ground, and in consequence of much timber and marshy land, difficulty would attend its capture. He dropped down the river to Hunter's Point, three miles above Belmont, disembarked, and at eight o'clock on the morning of November 7th a slow and cautious march for the camp was begun. He soon met Confederate troops from Belmont, and the battle was on. General Grant was the only man in the command who had ever been under fire. Early in the engagement his horse was shot from under him, but he immediately got another and led the advance. His men behaved well until the camp was captured, when, supposing their victory was complete, demoralization seized them.



Grant says: "The moment the camp was reached our men laid down their arms and began rummaging the tents to pick up trophies. Some of the higher officers were little better than the privates. They galloped about from one cluster of men to another and at every halt delivered a short eulogy upon the Union cause and the achievements of the command."

After fighting four hours, during which reinforcements were being sent to the Confederates from Columbus, there was nothing further for Grant to do than to burn the camp and retreat to the boats. Some of the officers thought they were completely surrounded by the enemy, and that the next thing to do was to surrender. But the General always had the right word for the right time; and instantly he made the inspiring announcement: "We have cut our way in, and can cut our way out!" The officers and men came to their senses, and with some degree of order a retreat to the transports was made. Grant was in the rear—the only man in the command between the Confederates and the transports. He had been looking after the welfare of the weak and the wounded. It was about this time in the day that the wearing of the ordinary blue army overcoat used by the private soldiers saved his life. General Polk, of Louisiana, who had left a bishopric to command Confederate troops, said to his sharpshooters: "There's a Yankee, if you want to try your aim." But his men were too busy firing at the crowded transports, and "deemed the solitary soldier unworthy of notice."



When General Grant reached the bank of the river where the transports were lying, he found that the plank of his steamer had been pulled in, the captain supposing that all were aboard. Being observed, the engineer was ordered not to start his engines. The bank was steep and no pathway led to the boat. But this gave the General no concern, and as naturally as if riding on a road, he started his horse over the bank. With his hind feet well under him, the animal slid down to the water's edge, and then trotted, on a single plank, twelve or fifteen feet to the boat, the rider keeping the saddle with perfect composure.

As a result of the dash upon Belmont, many tents, with other camp equipage, were burned, one hundred and seventy-five prisoners and two cannons were captured, four cannons were spiked, the Confederate expedition was broken up, and Colonel Oglesby's command was saved. More than that: the experience prepared the men for the next battle and also demonstrated General Grant's ability to command; and in a strategic sense, military critics commented favorably on the result.



## XVI.

### THE COUNTRY IS ELECTRIFIED.



TWO days after the battle of Belmont, Major General Halleck superseded Fremont as commander of the department, which included Missouri, Arkansas, and West Kentucky to the Cumberland. General Grant's jurisdiction was so enlarged as to embrace the district of Cairo and the territory containing the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers.

Up to the beginning of 1862, little had been done anywhere by the Union forces. The three generals who had the most important commands were McClellan in the East, Buell in the department of the Ohio, with headquarters at Louisville, and Halleck in Missouri. From the beginning of November, 1861, to the close of January, 1862, the Confederates were active in moving troops into Kentucky and Northwestern Tennessee, and fortifying some important points, while nothing was be-



ing done by our commanders to prevent the insurgents from having their own way. "Just as Lincoln had to prick McClellan in Virginia, he had to prick Buell in Kentucky; and just as McClellan failed to respond in Virginia, Buell also failed in Kentucky." And as to Halleck, he was comfortably quartered in St. Louis and was occupied chiefly in holding back active operations.

The only officer having any considerable command, who grew restless under this stagnant condition of affairs, was General Grant. He was anxious to move against the enemy. His clear military eye saw the points which must be attacked. Fort Henry was on the Tennessee, and eleven miles eastward lay Fort Donelson on the west bank of the Cumberland. These Confederate strongholds "presented a kind of temptation which General Grant was less able to resist than were most of the Union generals at that time." He was always on the watchtower for a chance to get at the enemy.

Halleck did not clearly understand the importance of freeing the rivers of these forts, for early in January, 1862, General Grant begged permission to go to St. Louis and lay a plan of campaign before the commanding general. The permission was granted, but only in a half-hearted way, and when General Grant appeared at headquarters he was received with such cold indifference that before he could make his plan clear to Halleck, he was cut short and turned away. With all of General Grant's equipoise in the most harassing condition in



war, this rebuff staggered him, and he returned to Cairo much crestfallen.

Although he was sorely disappointed in the kind of reception Halleck gave him, General Grant did not surrender his hope of an early movement up the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers. He took counsel of his courage, and determined to try again. He consulted Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, who had a flotilla at Cairo. He cheerfully indorsed the General's plan, and as the proposed campaign was devoid of guesswork, General Grant telegraphed Halleck on the 28th of January: "If permitted I will take Fort Henry on the Tennessee." On the 29th, the persistent brigadier general wrote full particulars concerning the movement to the affluent, scholarly, but doubting commander of the Missouri. The urgency with which the General pleaded his cause finally brought from the timid Halleck permission to move up the Tennessee.

The expedition was started on the 2nd of February. The land forces consisted of 17,000 men who were moved on transports; and in addition to this force were seven gunboats commanded by Flag Officer Foote. On approaching Fort Henry it became evident that the troops would not be needed in the attack. The flotilla began blowing shot into the fort on the forenoon of Thursday the 6th, and although the enemy had seventeen heavy guns, the work done by Foote was so effective that in one hour and twenty minutes, General Lloyd Tilghman raised the white flag. The camp and garrison



numbered 2,800, but the General, foreseeing that the fort was in danger of falling, ordered his men to retreat to Donelson.

The fall of Fort Henry diffused general joy in the North, and stimulated the openly expressed hope for more of such victories. With General Grant in command of the invading army, the sign of the time portended important and gratifying news. Therefore, when Henry fell he telegraphed Halleck that he would take Fort Donelson on Saturday, the 8th. He had studied carefully the topography of the country. Furthermore, he knew the men in command of the fort—Floyd, Pillow, and Buckner—and this gave him confidence.

But suddenly the bottom seemed to have fallen out of the roads. The rain and snow were so prolonged that the supply trains and artillery could not be moved as early as General Grant had hoped. Almost any other general would have despaired of moving an army at all in such a country and in such a season. But if General Grant had been told that it was impossible to make an early move on Donelson he would have made a reply something like that of Pompey the Great, who when told that his fleet could not sail, replied: "It is necessary to sail; not necessary to live." It was necessary for General Grant's army to take Fort Donelson; "not necessary to live." In this movement against Donelson, General Grant acted without express orders from Halleck. It was a plan wholly conceived by himself;



and therefore he held himself responsible for the results of the campaign.

On the 12th of February General Grant was able to start his army of 15,000 men for Donelson. At the beginning of the movement he had with him General Charles F. Smith and General John A. McClelland and two days later General Lew Wallace joined him with 2,500 men. A portion of Foote's fleet which had been on the Tennessee was taken up the Cumberland to co-operate with the land forces at Donelson.

The fort was fairly well invested in twenty-four hours, "when 15,000 Federal troops, without intrenchment, confronted an intrenched army of 21,000." For two days there were several sharp attacks by both sides; but "the sun went down on the night of the 14th of February, 1862, leaving the army before Fort Donelson anything but comforted over the prospects." On that day Foote endeavored to repeat on the Cumberland the victory he had won on the Tennessee; but the garrison had the advantage, and in less than two hours every boat in the flotilla was disabled and the flag officer severely wounded.

The weather was bitterly cold, the troops were without tents, and many were destitute of blankets and overcoats. But the dauntless courage and the confidence of the commander were the hope of the army. On Saturday morning, the 15th, he was supplied with an abundance of ammunition, and was reinforced with 10,000 men. At the break of day on Saturday, Foote sent a messen-



ger to General Grant asking for a consultation. The General hastened to the flagship *St. Louis*, some five miles distant; and after a brief meeting he started for the army and on his way was met by a staff officer who informed him that McClelland's division was in danger from a severe attack by the enemy. Galloping at full speed the General reached the lines about nine o'clock, and found that a portion of the army was becoming almost paralyzed—not from the want of courage, but because their cartridge boxes were nearly empty. He lost no time in riding down the line and shouting to the men, "Fill your cartridge boxes, quick, the enemy is trying to escape, but don't let them get away!" This gave the troops renewed courage; and Grant afterwards said: "I saw that either side was ready to give way if the other showed a bold front. I took the opportunity to order an advance along the whole line." The fighting was fierce from beginning to end. Every division commander did gallant work on that day. The brave, strong soldiers from the West fought with such courage and persistence under the inspiring leadership of their commander that the close of Saturday made the fall of Donelson certain.

Two of the Confederate commanders—Pillow and Buckner—knew Grant, and were convinced that it would be a useless sacrifice of life to resist an attack on Sunday morning. So a council of war was held in the quiet of Saturday night, with the result that Floyd, in command, and Pillow, next in rank, slipped away with



a small force, and the humiliation of surrendering was shifted on Buckner, General Grant's chum at West Point.

At dawn of Sunday, February 16th, 1862, Buckner sent General Grant a note requesting the appointment of commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation. But Grant was not playing war, and immediately he dispatched the following note to his old comrade:

*"General S. B. Buckner, Confederate Army.*

"Sir: Yours of this date proposing armistice and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation is just received. No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted.

"I propose to move immediately upon your works.

*"U. S. GRANT, Brigadier General."*

General Buckner saw grim humor in the note, but knowing something of Grant, he gracefully accepted the situation. The capture was from 12,000 to 15,000 prisoners, 20,000 stands of arms, 65 cannon, 3,000 horses, and a large quantity of commissary stores. In no other department of the army had so decisive a victory been won. It was an inspiration to the country. The victories at Henry and Donelson raised the dark curtain which before had almost hidden hope for the future.

Four days after the battle General Grant wrote: "For four successive nights, without shelter during the most inclement weather known in this latitude, the troops faced an enemy in large force in a position chosen by himself; and we secured the greatest number of



prisoners of war ever taken in a battle on this continent." And without vainglory he might have said that Donelson was as great and significant a victory as the capitulation of Ulm to Napoleon, which has filled such a large space in history.

There is a beautiful incident connected with the fall of the stronghold on the Cumberland which General Grant was too modest to include in the *Memoirs*. Many years after the event, General Buckner, speaking at a Grant birthday gathering, said: " \* \* \* "Under these circumstances I surrendered to General Grant. I had at a previous time befriended him, and it has been justly said that he never forgot an act of kindness. I met him on the boat (at the surrender), and he followed me when I went to my quarters. He left the officers of his own army and followed me, with that modest manner peculiar to him, into the shadow, and there he tendered me his purse. It seems to me that in the modesty of his nature he was afraid the light would witness that act of generosity, and sought to hide it from the world."

The story of the relationship between Grant and Halleck can be read only with regret. Although the news that Donelson had fallen caused abounding joy in the North, and the government at Washington was filled with cheer and took on new hope, not a word of personal congratulation came from Halleck. Perhaps jealousy, so common in the army, got the better of his judgment. And McClellan, who, as yet had accomplished nothing,



was also silent. But the most curious thing of all is that Halleck should ask for the command of the West in return for the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson. Perhaps he claimed this enlargement of his powers by the strange process of reasoning that "he permitted Grant to capture Fort Henry, and did not prevent him from capturing Fort Donelson." Halleck was then, as afterwards, seeking "to reap where he had not sown." And more than this, his dispatches to Washington reflected on Grant as a commander by indicating that he would have been defeated except for the able generalship of Smith, therefore he asked that the latter be made the senior major general. But before Halleck could tell the President his wants, Stanton, on Monday morning following the surrender, proposed that General Grant be raised to the rank of major general, and immediately Lincoln made the nomination, and following this promotion came those of Smith, McClelland, and Wallace in recognition of their ability and bravery in battle.

In three days after the capture of Donelson Halleck telegraphed McClellan: "Give me the Western division of the army and I will split secession in twain in one month." And on the same day he wired the War Department: "If Buell will come down and help me we can end the war in the West in less than a month." But neither McClellan nor the War Department was influenced by these boastful dispatches. So far as McClellan was concerned, Buell was his personal friend,



and he did not propose that he should play second to Halleck. And furthermore, McClellan was deeply concerned in the question as to how Halleck's sudden success in the Western department would affect his own standing and authority as Commander of all the armies.

Commenting on this instinct of jealousy, Nicolay and Hay say: "While the three generals (McClellan, Halleck, and Buell) were discussing high strategy and grand campaigns by telegraph, and probably deliberating with more anxiety the possibilities of personal fame, the simple soldering of Grant and Foote was solving some of the problems that confused scientific hypotheses."

While the siege of Donelson was going on, Brigadier General William T. Sherman was in command of the mouth of the Cumberland. He was General Grant's senior in rank, but he took a personal interest in the commander at Donelson, and wrote him notes of encouragement, sent him reinforcements and supplies as rapidly as possible, and requested him to disregard rank and call upon him for such assistance as he might need. This was the beginning of a friendship as beautiful as that of Damon and Pythias, and a love of one for the other as warm and lasting as that sealed by the covenant of David and Jonathan.

A few days after the victory at Donelson, a new and encouraging voice was raised in favor of General Grant. Roanoke Island, in North Carolina, was captured on the 7th day of February by General Burnside and Com-



modore Goldsborough. This event, with the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, aroused the patriotic enthusiasm of Horace Greeley, and in the *Tribune* of the 18th of the month he stated that to Edwin M. Stanton more than to any other individual, "these auspicious events are due." Mr. Stanton, not wishing to accept such adulation, wrote a letter to Mr. Greeley, in which he said: "We may well rejoice at the recent victories, for they teach that battles are to be won now, and by us, in the same and only way that they were ever won by any people since the days of Joshua, by boldly pursuing and striking the foe. What, under the blessing of Providence, I conceive to be the true organization of victory and military combination to end this war was declared in a few words by General Grant's message to General Buckner: 'I propose to move immediately upon your works.'"

The story of General Grant's smoking habit cannot be separated from the history of Donelson. It was given to General Horace Porter by Grant many years after the victory: "I had been a light smoker previous to the attack on Donelson. . . . Admiral Foote having been wounded, at his request, I went to his flagship to confer with him. He gave me a cigar, which I smoked on my way back to my headquarters. On the road I was met by a staff officer, who announced that the enemy was making a vigorous attack. I galloped forward, and while riding among the troops, giving directions for repelling the assault, I carried the cigar in my hand.



It had gone out, but it seems that I continued to hold the stump between my fingers throughout the battle (Saturday). In the accounts published in the papers I was represented as smoking a cigar in the midst of the conflict; and many persons, thinking, no doubt, that tobacco was my chief solace, sent me boxes of the choicest brands from everywhere in the North. As many as ten thousand were soon received. I gave away all I could get rid of, but having such a quantity on hand I naturally smoked more than I would have done under ordinary circumstances, and I have continued the habit ever since."

Among the noteworthy surprises associated with the winning of Donelson is that, despite all embarrassing conditions, raw troops, overflowing rivers, heavy rain, severe snow and cold, General Grant, so fresh from obscurity, should win the first decisive battle of the War of the Rebellion; and that this plain man, as unassuming as a private soldier, should become the first stirring force in the field for the preservation of the Union.



## XVII.

### HALLECK SEEKS GRANT'S DEBASEMENT.



WHILE the soul of the North was inflamed with joy, and the President and Congress were greatly encouraged by the decisive victory at Donelson, General Grant was incurring the displeasure of Halleck. A few days after that battle General Grant desired to go to Nashville to learn the condition of the city, that territory being within the limits of his command. He therefore telegraphed Halleck—who was still in St. Louis—that he would go to Nashville on the 28th of February, unless otherwise ordered. No response coming from him, General Grant proceeded to Nashville, and found that General Buell, with his army, had just reached the east side of the river, opposite the city, which was the first meeting of the two generals in the war.

This meeting brought out a noteworthy incident which illustrates the difference in the capacity for dis-



cernment of these commanders. General Grant had quickly studied the condition of affairs and told General Buell that the enemy was retreating as rapidly as possible on the west side. But General Buell insisted that fighting was going on only ten or twelve miles away, and wanted more troops with which to defend the city. General Grant maintained that the firing which Buell heard was only a fight with the rear-guard of the retreating enemy. General Buell was pessimistic, and with great emphasis said that he "knew" Nashville was in danger; but in less than twenty-four hours, as General Grant had already asserted, "the enemy was trying to get away from Nashville, and not return to it."

A deplorable course of events followed immediately after General Grant's successful campaign in Tennessee. He was singularly unfortunate after leaving Cairo on the 2nd of February for the campaigns against Forts Henry and Donelson, in not promptly receiving dispatches from the commander of the department. And on the other hand, there was a like delay in the transmission of dispatches from General Grant to Halleck. The telegraph line was a rickety affair at best, ran through a hostile country, and was usually out of repair; but many of the dispatches sent to General Grant were lost by the treachery of an operator who proved to be a Confederate in disguise.

The first two weeks in March were weeks of intense humiliation to General Grant. His great victories did not save him from the machinations of a secret foe. On



Sunday morning, March 2nd, 1862, General McClellan, desiring to give private orders for the movements of Halleck's and Buell's commands, went to the military telegraph office at his headquarters as general of the army of the Potomac, in Washington, and caused communication to be cut off from all wires westward, except those leading to Halleck's headquarters in St. Louis, and Buell's in Louisville. Over this exclusive wire Halleck sent to McClellan this message:

"I have had no communication from Grant all week. He left his command without my authority and went to Nashville. . . . Satisfied with his victory, he sits and enjoys it without regard to the future. I am worn out and tired with his neglect and inefficiency. General Smith is almost the only officer equal to the emergency."

Despite this libellous charge made by Halleck, and the affirmation by McClellan that he himself was "always" very friendly to Grant, he did not take time to investigate the charges, and on the following morning the same private wire carried back to Halleck this answer:

"Generals must observe discipline as well as private soldiers. Do not hesitate to arrest him at once, if the good of the service requires it, and place General Smith in command."

Still unrelenting in his purpose to damage General Grant's character, Halleck sent to McClellan, on the 4th of March, and over the same exclusive wire, this dispatch:

"A rumor has reached me that since the taking of Donelson, Grant has resumed his former bad habits. If so, it will account for his repeated neglect of my often repeated orders."



On the 2nd of March General Grant was ordered to take his forces from Donelson to Fort Henry, and on his arrival there on the 4th he found the following dispatch from Halleck:

*"Maj.-Gen. U. S. Grant, Fort Henry:*

"You will place Major General C. F. Smith in command of the expedition, and remain yourself at Fort Henry. Why do you not obey my orders to report strength and positions of your command?"

W. H. HALLECK, *Major General.*"

The expedition referred to in this dispatch was the taking of a large part of General Grant's command up the Tennessee—an unconscious movement in bringing on the battle of Shiloh. Of course he was astounded by the injustice of such an order. He could not imagine who or what inspired it. Nothing in the history of war was more grotesque than those two office generals McClellan and Halleck—sitting in solemn judgment upon the hero of Donelson; and very naturally General Grant was pricked to the heart to think that some secret foe was contriving to lower his rank in the army.

If one wants a lesson in patience, in self-restraint, in coolness of judgment, and in loyalty to duty, he must study the conduct of General Grant during the ninety days immediately following Donelson. In singularity and pathos nothing in the career of any distinguished commander equals it. His dispatch to Halleck on the 5th of March shows how firmly General Grant had command of his temper. With positiveness, and yet with modesty and politeness, he informed the commander of



the department that he had made daily reports of his movements; and he adds:

"Believing sincerely that I must have enemies, between you and myself, who are trying to impair my usefulness, I respectfully ask to be relieved from further duty in the department."

The orders relieving him went into effect at once, and the expedition moved up the Tennessee under the command of General Smith, his junior in rank. General Grant never forgot the trial of his soul at that time. Within a few months of his death he wrote these pathetic lines:

"Thus in less than two weeks after the victory at Donelson, the two leading generals of the army were in correspondence as to what disposition should be made of me, and in less than three weeks I was virtually in arrest and without a command."

A few days after the dispatches, so damaging to General Grant, were sent by Halleck to Washington, all the records which related to the general command of the army were consolidated in the office of the adjutant general in the War Department. Mr. Gorham, in his life of Stanton, says:

"This brought to light much information which was new to the President and the Secretary of War. Among these discoveries were the private dispatches from Halleck to McClellan of March 2nd and 4th, 1862, so damaging to Grant. . . . This evidently was the first knowledge the War Department had that they (the charges) had been made by Halleck."

On the 10th of March, Adjutant General Thomas, of the army, requested from Halleck a report as to the ground upon which the harsh accusations against General Grant were made. This peremptory request



from Thomas forced Halleck into a trap of his own inventing. Not being in possession of any facts with which to sustain the cruel charges, he contented himself with the simple suggestion that no further notice be taken of the matter.

One cannot read this singular incident of the war without being amazed at the part played in it by McClellan. He did not then explain, nor at any time thereafter, by what sort of reasoning he justified himself in being so ready to suggest the deep humiliation of his friend and comrade when there was not at hand any tangible evidence to support the terrible accusations. Another and an amazing feature of the incident is, that when McClellan had all the light necessary to prove the falsity of the charges, and General Grant was still in the dark as to the identity of his secret foe, he did not promptly take measures to relieve him of the load of blame which rested so heavily upon him. In *My Own Story*, McClellan says:

"More than a year after the event, General William B. Franklin wrote me that on meeting General Grant at Memphis . . . he asked what had made me hostile to him. Franklin replied that he knew I was not hostile, but very friendly to him. Grant then said that that could not be so, for, without reason, I had ordered Halleck to relieve him from command and arrest him soon after Fort Donelson, and that Halleck had interposed to save him. I took no steps to undeceive Grant, trusting to time to elucidate the question."

Milton says: "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple in a free and open encounter, and who ever knew Truth being put to the worse?" But in General



Grant's case, McClellan did not seem inclined to give Truth a fair chance in the grapple. And after a lapse of forty-six years, time has not elucidated the motive which prompted McClellan to order the arrest of Grant.

McClellan was relieved from the command of all the armies of the Union on the 11th of March, 1862, and Halleck not being able to make good his charges against General Grant, the latter was restored to his command on the 17th of the same month, and at once he proceeded to Savanna. Halleck furnished him a copy of a dispatch from himself to Washington entirely exonerating him, "but" say the *Memoirs*, "he did not inform me that it was his own reports that had created all the trouble." When he arrived at Savanna to relieve General Smith, he found him in a sick bed, the result of an injury received when stepping on a boat at Donelson, and from which he died on the 25th of April, 1862.

A valuable contribution to the history of Halleck's ill treatment of Grant is the following letter written by the latter to Mrs. Grant a few days after he assumed command of the forces at Savanna:

"SAVANNA, March 29, 1862.

"All the slanders you have seen against me originated away from where I was. The only foundation was from the fact that I was ordered to remain at Fort Henry and send the expedition under Major-General Smith. This was ordered because General Halleck received no report from me for nearly two weeks after the fall of Donelson. The same occurred with me. I received nothing from him. . . .



“When I was ordered to remain behind, it was the cause of much astonishment among the troops of my command, and also disappointment. I never allowed a word of contradiction to go out from my headquarters. You need not fear but what I shall come out triumphantly. I am pulling no wires, as political generals do, to advance myself. I have no future ambition. My object is to carry on my part of this war successfully, and I am perfectly willing that others may make all the glory they can out of it.”

The letter is characteristic of the man. It reveals a strong head, a stout heart, a prophetic eye, and a sublime confidence in himself, when an officer, superior in rank, was intriguing for his debasement.



## XVIII.

### SHILOH AND VICTORY.



It has already been noted that General Grant assumed command of the Army of the Tennessee on the 17th of March, and that he immediately proceeded to Savanna, on the east bank of the Tennessee river. The town is two hundred and ten miles from Paducah, where the river empties into the Ohio. Nine miles farther up the Tennessee (southward) was historic Pittsburg Landing, then almost uninhabited. Twenty-two miles to the southwest of the Landing was Corinth, Miss., small in population, but large in its importance as a strategic point because of its railway intersections. General Grant was not insensible to the value of the position as a railway center, and on being restored to his command he began to gather his forces at Pittsburg Landing for the purpose of striking a blow at Corinth.

At the beginning of the movement to Pittsburg



Landing, General Grant's army consisted of five divisions, under the command of William T. Sherman, John A. McClernand, Stephen A. Hurlbut, Lew Wallace, and, General Smith being ill, his division was placed temporarily under the command of W. H. L. Wallace. Buell had been ordered from Nashville with his army of 40,000, and was to join General Grant at Savanna. During the interval between taking command of the army and the opening of the battle of Shiloh, he usually spent the day at the Landing counselling with his generals and returning to Savanna in the evening. His purpose was to move his headquarters to that point as early as the 3d or 4th of April, but the *Memoirs* say: "Buell was expected daily and would come in at Savanna. . . . I therefore remained at this point a few days longer than I otherwise should have done in order to meet him on his arrival."

By no principle of aggressive warfare could a clash of arms in the vicinity of Pittsburg Landing be averted. It was while General Grant was practically in retirement during the first two weeks in March that General Charles F. Smith, then in temporary command, selected this place at which the Army of the Tennessee should be concentrated; and when General Grant was restored to his command and ordered to Savanna, he visited the Landing and making a careful study of the ground, said: "This is the place from which to begin the movement against the enemy." And it was well that that part of the West was the place where the manhood, the



courage, and the endurance of the Army of the Tennessee under General Grant, and the Confederate forces under General Albert Sydney Johnston, should be tested.

General Johnston seems to have been informed of Buell's movement; and in an aggressive mood he laid a plan "to whip Grant before Buell could join him, then whip Buell, and having thus disposed of the Northern forces in detail, to carry the war up into Ohio." Therefore, Johnston, in his self-confidence issued a grandiloquent address to his army, and on Saturday he began the march to his Waterloo.

At three o'clock on Sunday morning, April 6th, three companies of the Forty-fifth Missouri regiment were sent out from General Prentiss' division to reconnoiter. Going in a southwesterly course they struck the enemy's pickets a short distance from the front of Sherman's division. Shots were exchanged, and the firing being heard by General Johnston, who, with his staff, was taking an early breakfast, he asked his son Preston to record the time. It was exactly fourteen minutes past five o'clock, and the order to advance was given immediately.

At the same hour that Johnston and his staff were taking an early breakfast two or three miles from the advanced line of the Union forces, General Grant and his staff were breakfasting at Savanna. Suddenly firing was heard in the direction of Pittsburg Landing. In five minutes the General and his staff were steaming up



the Tennessee. The firing was the shock of battle. Shiloh had begun. He arrived at the Landing between eight and nine o'clock, and found considerable confusion among the troops. For three hours there had been no one to direct them. The General lost no time in riding to the front, and giving such orders as conditions seemed to demand. As time passed, the fury of the conflict increased. From sunrise to sunset it was a desperate struggle on both sides. Americans were fighting Americans. Men fell fast on every hand. In the Union Army, except perhaps on the extreme left, brigade after brigade and division after division staggered in the effort to hold their positions. Hundreds upon hundreds of troops which had never before scented powder in battle became panic-stricken. An unintermitting tempest of bullets, shot, and shells raged throughout the day. "Everything seemed to be quaking."

But all through the scene of carnage, the rolling back of troops, the loss of ground, the man who bore the tremendous responsibility of victory or defeat had hope in reserve. Hope is not worth counting where conditions are hopeful; but on that eventful Sunday afternoon, when other commanders seemed almost in despair, General Grant's hope shone like a star through the darkness. Candid and dispassionate testimony on this point is given by Mr. Whitelaw Reid, distinguished as a war correspondent, and who was on the battlefield at the time: "The tremendous roar on the left, momentarily nearer and nearer, told of an effort to cut him off



from the river and from retreat. Grant sat on his horse, quiet, thoughtful, almost stolid. Said one to him, 'Does not the prospect begin to look gloomy?' 'Not at all,' was the quiet reply. 'They can't force our lines around these batteries to-night, it is too late. Delay counts everything with us. To-morrow we shall attack them with fresh troops and drive them of course.' I was myself a listener to this conversation, and from it I date, in my own case at least, the beginning of any belief in Grant's greatness."

For twelve hours every physical energy of General Grant and his army had been taxed to its utmost endurance by such a conflict as this continent had never seen before. The powerful forces which were hurled against him had greatly depleted his army. Prentiss and his division had been captured. W. H. L. Wallace fell mortally wounded. The commands of Sherman and McClelland which did the hardest fighting of the day at the little Shiloh church (after which the battle takes its name) were rolled back. Much ground had been lost, practically nothing gained. And no doubt amidst these awful battle scenes, with his troops in the extreme of exhaustion, General Grant felt like calling out: "Would to heaven that Buell or night would come."

General Johnston was mortally wounded in the afternoon, but still determined "to whip Grant," he continued to give orders till weakness caused him to faint, and on being taken from his horse, he expired in a few minutes. Beauregard took command, and the story was



current at the time that he vowed his horse would drink of the waters of the Tennessee that night. But he did not reckon on the frailty of a beast emanating from a wild imagination, for when night came, Beauregard could not reach the Tennessee, and the battle was more than half won by the Union army.

In support of this view of the condition of affairs on Sunday evening, the substance of a page from the *Life of Lincoln*, by Nicolay and Hay, is of much value. The plan of the Confederates was to get possession of Pittsburg Landing, cut off Grant's means of retreat by seizing or destroying the transports, and compel him to capitulate. But Grant was so successful in shattering the Confederate plan that Beauregard ordered the whole army to withdraw from the fight, and to go into bivouac until the following day. Eager as that commander was for victory, the conclusion had been forced on his mind that, for that day at least, it was not within the power of his army to complete their undertaking; and accordingly, he directed that the fight should cease, and this determination was reached when he did not know that Buell had arrived.

It would seem that among thoughtful and unprejudiced students of the Civil War, there can hardly be two minds as to the value of General Grant's services during the strain of Sunday's engagement. Of course "the blind and intricate battlefield offered little chance to either side for careful planning; and the commanding generals were not able to render the usual service."



But every regiment, brigade, and division commander knew that General Grant was on the field, and it is hardly a matter of doubt that his presence had much sustaining influence. On this point there is significance in the remark of the General made several months after the battle. When asked what event could have happened to change the result on Sunday afternoon, he said: "If either Sherman or myself had been seriously wounded before the formation of the last line near the river was completed, between four and five o'clock, the field would probably have been lost."

After General Grant had commanded on many battlefields, he was asked by General Porter: "In all your battles up to this time, where do you think your presence upon the field was most useful?" Hesitating for a moment he answered: "Well, I don't know." But after a pause he said in an impressive tone: "Perhaps at Shiloh." Then he instantly changed the subject for he never desired to speak of the battle. The price paid for the victory had a peculiarly depressing effect upon him; but he knew, as every other general knew, who bore his part of the burden and responsibility of Sunday's engagement, that by no other means than an awful sacrifice could victory have been won.

During the battle on Sunday General Grant suffered persistent pain caused by a bruised ankle, the result of his horse falling on the previous Friday night, which deprived him of rest and sleep, but nevertheless he visited every important part of the field, knew personally



the condition of affairs, and on Sunday night he rode through the darkness and the storm, and gave orders for the renewal of the battle at the break of day.

Colonel Theophilus L. Dickey, of the Fourth Illinois Cavalry, who, after the war, became justice of the Supreme Court of his State, was in the battle of Shiloh. He says that after nightfall on Sunday, the members of the General's staff were discussing what seemed to them a hopeless situation, and the Colonel was urged to go to the General and obtain his views on the condition of things. The Colonel found him sitting under a tree, his only shelter from the beating storm. The General listened attentively to a doleful rehearsal of the results of Sunday's battle; and then, straightening out his uninjured leg, he asked: "Dickey, do you like this kind of cavalry boot?" The single question closed the interview.

That night General Grant saw the members of his staff, and spreading before them a map, he called their attention to the position of the enemy, and then issued orders which were to be executed at a certain time on the morrow unless other contingencies happened. His staff were amazed, and at once they saw how little they understood the real question; and for the first time they seemed to realize that the General was the master of the situation.

On Sunday circumstances compelled General Grant to fight a defensive battle. He could put only 25,000 men in line, while Johnston's strength was not less than



40,000. But on Monday morning, Buell placed between 18,000, and 20,000 on the left, and Lew Wallace added 5,000 or 6,000 on the right.

This is not the place to discuss the matter of Buell's and Wallace's belated arrival at Pittsburg Landing. Neither of them reached the field in time to take part in Sunday's engagement. But when these officers placed their commands on the firing line on Monday, they made a large contribution to the splendid victory of the day. As both sides to the controversy "have had their day in court," the matter should be relegated to the graveyard of dead issues never to be resurrected.

A few minutes after the break of day on Monday, General Grant's army fired the first shot. Beauregard seemed determined to fight an offensive battle. At once the great columns of the Union army moved steadily forward, and with the rising of the sun the engagement became general. The Federal troops, in solid ranks, and with a continuous fire, regained the ground lost on Sunday. At three o'clock in the afternoon, while General Grant was closely watching the progress of the battle, word came to him that the enemy was faltering on the left. He saw that the time had come for the final blow. He himself was within musket range of the enemy. Quickly he sent the words down the lines: "Now is the time to drive them." The charge was made, the field was swept; and Shiloh was won.

The Union loss was 1,750 killed; 8,400 wounded; and 2,800 missing. The Confederate loss was supposed



to be much greater, as the estimate of burials for the whole field was 4,000.

To this day there is much persistent misunderstanding of the battle of Shiloh. The particulars which have formed the subject of dispute relate to those regarding the situation at the opening of the battle on Sunday morning, and also to what extent the presence of General Grant had bearing on the fortunes of the day. Some of the General's harshest critics are those who had little or nothing to do with the battle of Sunday, which calls to mind one of Napoleon's meditations on St. Helena: "Those generals only who never commanded armies in the field have not committed errors." To particularize in regard to the blunders imputed to General Grant, in not being prepared against surprise by the enemy, in defying danger by choosing an advanced position, in failing to throw up intrenchments by which to protect his troops, and in not providing means of rapid retreat, would not elucidate the subject to the satisfaction of all readers. But to the average person who knows something of Grant and war history, it is quite humorous to find critics calling the General imprudent in not seeking safety behind earthworks, and in not providing a way for rapid retreat.

In his judgment General Grant had no need of intrenchment, as it was his purpose to take Corinth as soon as Buell arrived; and it is idle to conjecture what might have been had he judged otherwise. He was commissioned to command the Army of the Tennessee in



its movements against Johnston; and his natural bent of mind was not to be hammered at behind intrenchments, but to move at the earliest possible hour against the enemy's works of Corinth. General Grant clung with tenacity to aggressive tactics, and fought behind fewer breastworks than any other commander in the army, and his success was incomparable. No being, not gifted with prescience, has a right to say that it was a criminal blunder not to fortify even for the short time the General expected to remain at Pittsburg Landing. A great battle was imminent from which neither side could escape with honor. The powerful opposing forces could not clash at the Landing, with or without intrenchments, nor by an assault upon the strong works at Corinth, without a terrible sacrifice of life. General Johnston attempted to take General Grant by surprise, lost his life in the struggle that followed, and did not accomplish a single purpose for which he brought on the battle; and leaving behind him more than ten thousand in killed, wounded, and missing, Beauregard fled back to Corinth disheartened.

In years to come when the careful historian, unbiassed by prejudice or passion, with all the facts which the light of history can reveal before him, makes record of Shiloh, that record will clearly show that in contending for a whole day with a force superior to his own, General Grant displayed the highest qualities of courage, endurance, and generalship. Thoughtful military critics marvel that in all the circumstances, he saved himself from crushing defeat; that through all the roar



of cannon, din of musketry, destruction of life, breaking of lines, staggering columns, doubt and despairs, he did not lose faith in himself or his army, and that amid the excitement, confusion, vexations, and discouragements of the day, he was so calm that no unkind or doubtful word, or harsh command, came from his lips. Beauregard, in directing that his attacks should cease on Sunday evening, and ordering his troops to withdraw until the following day, was virtually making a confession that General Grant had thus far defeated all his purposes. Men marvel, too, that Grant, generous in heart, and calm and fair in judgment, did not impute neglect of duty to any officers or men engaged in that momentous conflict on Sunday, and that Shiloh cost fewer in killed and wounded than any other victory of the same magnitude won during the Civil War.\* And the wonder of all wonders of the war is, that in ten months from the day this silent, obscure, unambitious man was given the command of a volunteer regiment, he was the successful commander in the first of the five greatest battles ever fought in open field on the American continent.

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\* The following are the Union losses in killed and wounded in the five greatest battles in open field fought in the Civil War: Shiloh—Union force, 1st day, 33,000, 2nd day, 48,000, Confederate force, 40,300; Union k. and w., 10,162. Antietam—Union forces, 75,300, Conf. force, estimated from 45,000 to 70,000, Union k. and w. 11,600. Variously described as a Union victory and as indecisive. Murfreesboro—Union force, 41,400, Conf. force, 34,700, Union k. and w. 9,200. Union victory. Gettysburg—Union force, 78,000, Conf. force, 75,000, Union k. and w., 17,684. Union victory. Chickamauga—Union force, 58,200, Conf. force, 66,300, Union k. and w. 11,400. Union defeat.



## XIX.

### AFTER THE BATTLE.



WHEN the smoke of battle had cleared away, General Grant issued the following general order:

“The general commanding congratulates the troops who so gallantly repulsed and routed a numerically superior force of the enemy, composed of the flower of the Southern army, commanded by their ablest generals, and fought by them with all the desperation of despair.

“In numbers engaged, no such contest ever took place on this continent; in importance of results, but few such have taken place in the history of the world.

“Whilst congratulating the brave and gallant soldiers, it becomes the duty of the general commanding to make special notice of the brave wounded and those killed upon the field. Whilst they leave friends and relatives to mourn their loss, they have won a nation’s gratitude and undying laurels, not to be forgotten by future generations, who will enjoy the blessings of the best government the sun ever shone upon, preserved by their valor.”

But the general public did not seem to understand the importance of the victory, and it began to make com-



plaints. It first exulted "because Beauregard was compelled to retreat, and then grumbled because Grant permitted him to retreat." This peculiar feeling was the product of the seed sown by reckless and prejudiced newspaper correspondents and editorial writers, who magnified the casualties of the battle and depreciated the gain. On the heel of these ill-natured complaints came a demand for General Grant's removal. But neither Lincoln nor Stanton sympathized with malcontents. The public was slow to understand the real situation at Shiloh. Getting its information from the newspapers, it could see only the worst side of the conflict; and Halleck, who had caused General Grant more trouble and anxiety than did the Confederate generals, did much to foster this bitter feeling of opposition. For instance, on the 13th of April, he telegraphed Stanton from Pittsburg Landing (having arrived there two days after the battle) as follows:

"It is the unanimous opinion here that Brigadier General Sherman saved the fortunes of the day on the 6th, and contributed largely to the glorious victory on the 7th. He was in the thickest of the fight, having three horses killed under him, and being twice wounded. I respectfully request that he be made a major general of volunteers."

It is true that General Sherman merited high praise for his services at Shiloh, but Halleck's dispatch did not influence the War Department. On the 23d of April, Stanton demanded from Halleck a detailed account of the battle, and a positive statement as to whether any neglect or misconduct on the part of General Grant or



any other officer contributed to the casualties that befell the Union forces on Sunday. For the second time Halleck had been caught in a trap which he had unwittingly set for himself. He preferred not to name any individual officer who had been derelict to his duty, and he never complied with the request of the War Department.

The widespread clamor for General Grant's removal was one of the most amazing incidents of the war. Considering all the facts connected with Sunday's battle, the charges against him, the libellous epithets, the personal prejudice, and the malevolent and unsustained assertions, had no parallel in the history of modern warfare. The condition of things was paradoxical as well as grotesque. While President Lincoln was signing a proclamation calling upon the people to assemble in places of worship and render thanks to God for the success (Donelson and Shiloh) which had attended the army of the Union, and one hundred guns were being fired in Washington in honor of Grant's victories, the public was clamoring for his retirement from the army.

Among the influential public men who were wild in their unreasonable prejudice against Grant and cried aloud for his dismissal, was Colonel Alexander K. McClure of Philadelphia. He could not see how the President could sustain himself if he persisted in retaining Grant. So he went to Washington to counsel with Mr. Lincoln, and urge him in the name of the people to remove Grant without delay. I will let the



Colonel tell in his own way the result of his visit to the President:

“I appealed to Lincoln for his own sake to remove Grant at once, and in giving my reasons for it I simply voiced the admittedly overwhelming protest from the loyal people of the land against Grant’s continuance in command. . . . When I had said everything that could be said from my standpoint, we lapsed into silence. Lincoln remained silent for what seemed a very long time. He then gathered himself up in his chair and said in a tone of earnestness that I shall never forget: ‘I can’t spare this man; he fights.’ That was all he said, but I knew that it was enough, and that Grant was safe in Lincoln’s hands against the countless hosts of enemies.”

Lincoln saved Grant, and Grant and his armies saved the nation. “He fights;” and by that sign he won at Shiloh. And in coming years, they who read history aright will learn that in General Grant’s pathway from Belmont to Appomattox, a pathway strewn with mighty deeds, he did not fight a battle in which he displayed more terrible determination, more inexplicable confidence, or accomplished more for the Union than on Sunday at Shiloh. Two days after the battle Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing, and assumed command of the troops. It was his purpose to strengthen the army and move on Corinth, whither Beauregard had retreated. Within three weeks he had over 100,000 men with which to begin his grand march. In reorganizing



and rearranging the army General Grant was substantially left out of consideration. To use his own words: "I was little more than an observer." And Sherman says: "For more than a month Grant thus remained without any apparent authority, frequently visiting me and others, and rarely complaining; but I could see that he felt deeply the indignity, if not the insult, heaped upon him."

This magnificent army began its march toward Corinth on the 30th of April, under the command of a general "who could not ride a horse faster than a walk." His advance on Corinth will be a curiosity of history for all time to come. So careful was he not to provoke the enemy to wrath lest there might be trouble, "that all commanders," says General Grant, "were cautioned against bringing on an engagement, and informed in so many words that it would be better to retreat than to fight."

The time made by Halleck in marching his splendid army with practically no enemy to impede his progress, is made strangely ridiculous by contrast. When Johnston and Beauregard moved the Confederate army from Corinth to the field of Shiloh, they consumed two days. But Halleck, passing over the same roads, making the same distance, wasted thirty days. And when Corinth was finally reached, this grand army, with surprise mingled with humiliation, gazed upon empty fortifications. The Confederates had folded their tents and stolen away. In a few days this grand collection of



troops, having accomplished nothing in going to Corinth, was distributed among various commanders and marched away—but General Grant remained.

His position at Corinth was but nominal. He keenly felt the wrong done him by Halleck, and for the fourth time in his life, and the last, his will-power failed him. The “Iron Duke” of the Civil War became heart-sick, his endurance was worn out, he longed for retirement and peace of mind. It was at this juncture that General Sherman’s visit to General Grant no doubt saved him to the nation. An account of this visit is given in Sherman’s own words:

“A short time before leaving Corinth I rode to Halleck’s headquarters . . . when he mentioned to me casually that Grant was going away next morning. I inquired the cause, and he said he did not know, but that Grant had applied for a thirty days’ leave, which had been given him. Of course we all knew that he was chafing under the slights of his anomalous position, and I determined to see him on my way back. . . I found him seated on a camp-stool, employed in assorting letters. . . I inquired if it were true that he was going away. He said, ‘yes.’ I then inquired the reason, and he said: ‘Sherman, you know I am in the way here. I have stood it as long as I can, and can endure it no longer.’ I inquired where he was going, and he said, ‘St. Louis.’ I then asked if he had any business there, and he said, ‘Not a bit.’ I then begged him to stay, illustrating his case by my own.



“Before the battle of Shiloh, I had been cast down by a mere newspaper assertion of ‘crazy’; but that single battle had given me new life, and now I was in high feather; and I argued with him that if he went away events would go right along, and he would be left out; whereas, if he remained, some happy accident might restore him to favor and his true place. . . . He promised to wait awhile, and not to go without seeing me again, or communicating with me. Very soon after this I was ordered to Chewalla, where on the 6th of June I received a note from him, saying that he had reconsidered his intention to leave, and would remain.”

Perhaps it is useless to speculate as to General Grant's future if, in his despondent mood his good friend Sherman had not come to his relief. Events were changing rapidly, and according to all human calculation, absenting himself from the activities of the army for a month would have lost him his position as second in command at Corinth. To write with carefulness and sincerity, one hesitates to predict how much General Grant's absence from the army at that critical period would have influenced the result of the war. Only the Omniscient God knows what would have been the fate of the Union forces had the General lost his rank in the army at that time.



## XX.

### RESUMING COMMAND AND WINNING BATTLES.



HEN General Grant concluded to remain with the army his headquarters were transferred to Memphis at his own request; but he remained there only a short time, for on the 10th of July Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island was sent to Corinth on a confidential mission in behalf of the authorities at Washington. On his arrival he sought the headquarters of Halleck, and after a private conference lasting several hours, he departed. The Governor's business at Corinth was to offer Halleck, in the name of the President, a place in Washington, with enlarged powers in the army: and on the 11th of July the following order was issued by the President:

"Ordered, that Major-General Halleck take command of all the land forces, and that he repair to this capital so soon as he can with safety to the position and operations within the department under his special charge."

At 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the same day, Hal-



leck wired his compliance with the order in these words :

"Your orders of this date are received. General Grant, next in command, is at Memphis. I have telegraphed to him to immediately repair to this place.

"I will start for Washington the moment I can have a personal interview with General Grant."

The call of Halleck to Washington was a gratifying close of General Grant's many troubles with that commander. He was himself again. He could now clearly see his way to success. But by the scattering of the army of 100,000 men who had made the fruitless march to Corinth, Grant was left in a hostile territory with only 50,000 troops. His front line extended from Memphis to Corinth, a distance of one hundred miles. This condition of affairs forced upon him a delicate responsibility. But at this time, as in almost all other periods of his career as a commander, he accomplished more than was expected of him. His nature demanded freedom to act, and action was proof of his ability to command and succeed. Instinctively he believed in the principle that a bold onset was half the battle.

"The Confederate Generals Price and Van Dorn were in front of him—southward—the former on the left and the latter on the right. In the middle of September they made a movement to effect a junction and attack and disperse Grant's forces, or together passing his flank to reinforce Bragg in his campaign in Kentucky against Buell." When Grant heard of the bold purpose of Price and Van Dorn, he immediately set his army in motion. He ordered Generals W. S. Rosecrans



and E. O. C. Ord, together having 17,000 men, to attack Iuka, twenty-two miles southeast of Corinth. For the purpose of directing the movement of the army in this engagement, General Grant made Burnsville, seven miles north of Iuka, his headquarters. The battle began late in the afternoon of September 19th, and on the following day the Confederates were forced to retreat.

Still determined to whip General Grant, Price and Van Dorn devised a plan to attack and capture Corinth. Grant gave the command at Corinth to Rosecrans, while his own headquarters were established at Jackson, Tenn., forty miles northward, where he could better direct the forces under him. Rosecrans had 23,000 men, while Price, Van Dorn, and Lowell had 38,000. The Confederates opened the battle on the 3d of October, and the resoluteness of the attack with such a superior force at first seemed likely to be successful. The battle was waged with a fierceness akin to Shiloh. But it was the good fortune of the Union troops "that on the next day they fought behind the breast works Grant had constructed after Halleck left the army." Determined as was the assault, it was repulsed with serious loss to the Confederates. Next to Shiloh it was the hardest fought battle in the West up to that time. The Union victory was so complete that it changed the whole aspect of affairs in Tennessee. It also prevented Price and Van Dorn from carrying out their cherished plan to reinforce Bragg. When the account of the success at Corinth reached Washington, it drew from President Lincoln a message of sincere congratulation.



## XXI.

### GRANT AND THE CONTRABANDS



ON the 25th of October, 1862, General Grant was given full command of the Department of the Tennessee; and immediately he made a campaign through central Mississippi, at which time he began to plan for the capture of Vicksburg. But before proceeding further with General Grant's army operations in the autumn and early winter of 1862, I wish to introduce an exceedingly interesting and important piece of history, which can be classed among many other incidents, showing that the mystery of his character was not wholly confined to organizing campaigns and winning battles.

General John Eaton, who died in 1905, was appointed chaplain of the Twenty-seventh Ohio volunteers, and after serving as colonel of the Sixty-third United States Colored Infantry, was made brigadier general by brevet. After the war he held the office of Commis-



sioner of the United States Bureau of Education for sixteen years. While serving as chaplain of his regiment, he became intimately acquainted with General Grant in the autumn of 1862. "Contrabands," as the negroes who reached the Union lines were then called, were numerous, and needed the care and protection of the government. General Grant understood this thoroughly. His thoughtfulness was far-reaching, and without consulting Chaplain Eaton or anyone else, he issued special order No. 15, in November, 1862:

"Chaplain Eaton of the Twenty-seventh Ohio Volunteers is hereby appointed to take charge of the contrabands that come into camp, organizing them into suitable companies for working, seeing that they are properly cared for, and setting them to work, picking, ginning, and baling all cotton now out and ungathered in the fields."

General Eaton wrote many interesting pages on "Lincoln, Grant, and the Negro," in which he tells with peculiar interest of his surprise when he first met General Grant. From the wild stories which were circulated about him shortly after the battle of Shiloh, he expected to find an intemperate, incompetent, brutal, and vulgar soldier; "but to my surprise," he says, "I found a simple, unassuming man, without any ostentation, living as plainly as a private soldier. My eyes were on the alert for signs of dissipation in his face, but there were no signs of that sort there. Everything about him betokened sobriety, simplicity, and moderation, and the atmosphere surrounding him showed dig-



nity and respect which his associate generals manifested for him."

When the special order was issued, General Eaton, then being only thirty years old and without business experience, asked to be relieved from the large responsibility thus imposed upon him. But General Grant had taken an accurate measurement of the young chaplain's qualification, and said: "You are the man who has all these darkies on his shoulders." He then went on to explain his plan for the solution of the negro problem, which he decided to take, as general of the army, without waiting for instructions from Washington.

General Eaton says the interview with Grant profoundly impressed him with the "General's ability, sincerity, and far-sighted statesmanship as he disclosed his plans for meeting the emergency," so far as the contrabands were concerned. He was the first general to take the initiative in utilizing in a practical and humane way, the labor of contrabands. Out of special order No. 15, originated the "Freedmen's Bureau."

Speaking of the conversations with Grant regarding his habits of life, General Eaton says: "He told me so freely of his old life that these conversations were as unexpected to me as they were delightful. I was particularly impressed with the candor with which he referred to the accusation of intemperance made against him. It was plain that his army life in Washington Territory and Oregon had been full of temptations, and it is more than probable that he followed the example of other



officers while there. To escape from that temptation was certainly one of his motives for leaving the army, and I feel impelled to state as plainly as I can that Grant's temperance was unimpeachable after he had reëntered the service and started upon his great career."

It always remained a mystery to General Eaton why General Grant selected him to bear the enormous responsibility of caring for the negroes who were escaping from slavery. The position of general superintendent of contrabands carried with it a vast amount of labor, anxiety, and accountability. And General Grant, with his usual reticence, never explained why the young Chaplain was appointed to do this important work. Although the General and the Chaplain had never met previous to this incident, the former seemed to know as if by intuition, the spirit and capacity of the man in whom he was placing so great a trust. The selection was made with remarkable wisdom, for thereby General Eaton was instrumental in saving thousands of human beings from starvation, and leading them into conditions that were new and unfamiliar.



## XXII.

### THE GREATEST SIEGE IN HISTORY.



GENERAL GRANT'S campaign through Mississippi was a preliminary study of how to capture Vicksburg. His chief disappointment during this campaign was the surrender of Holly Springs to Van Dorn on the 20th of December, 1862, by Colonel Murphy of the Eighth Wisconsin. It was General Grant's purpose to make that place a base of supplies in moving against Vicksburg from the east, and the unfortunate surrender compelled a radical change of plans.

On the 29th of December, General Sherman, with 30,000 men, made a test of the strength of the enemy's works at Vicksburg, by an attack at Chickasaw Bluffs, near the city. He was repulsed with considerable loss; and those in the North who knew nothing of war or of the difficulties of the situation, raised the cry of "Repulse, failure, and bungling." As is usually the case, the non-combatants were doing all the grumbling.



General Grant was not slow in comprehending that Vicksburg was the best fortified city, both by nature and military art, in all the land. He was convinced that as far as Vicksburg was concerned, fighting fire with fire would not avail in the effort to capture what Jefferson Davis was proud to call the "Gibraltar of America." But the fact that Grant had to fight a senseless clamor in the North as well as a determined foe in the South, and obstacles of nature, did not disturb him. But he fully realized the gravity of the situation. However, he did not shrink from the tremendous responsibility which the campaign placed upon him. He had a larger hope and a keener military insight than any other general in the field or at Washington. The authorities at the national capital were becoming restless with doubt and anxiety; but this strange commander, almost provokingly reticent at times, pursued the even tenor of his peculiar way. His mysterious genius gave him confidence; and while many generals and millions of people were wondering what he would do next, Sherman says he went on quietly to work out his own designs. He was evolving in his mind a movement which, to the military critics, was more hazardous and incomprehensible than could be found in the history of wars.

How to take Vicksburg was indeed the serious problem of the hour. The Union forces in the West could not be entirely successful so long as the great hills at Vicksburg, with their hundreds of frowning cannon, obstructed the Mississippi river. General Grant was



convinced that those hills, which stood like a defying, impregnable fortress, could not be taken from the north, and only from the east by moving an army of 30,000 or 40,000 men below Grand Gulf where he could secure a foothold on the east side of the river. After accomplishing this, his purpose was to make a rapid movement northeasterly, attack the enemy wherever found, drive him into Vicksburg, and "bottle him up." To his mind this could be done only by marching his troops on the Louisiana side of the river, from Milliken's Bend, seventeen miles above Vicksburg, to New Carthage, about twenty miles below the city.

Another plan, which, however, did not originate with General Grant, was to dig a canal across the narrow neck of land opposite Vicksburg, to intersect with the Mississippi below, a distance of one mile. It was thought that transports entering from the north, bearing troops and supplies, could pass through the canal with safety. An attempt was made to dig the canal in 1862, by General Thomas Williams, but high water caused an abandonment of the enterprise on the 27th of March, 1863.

The winter of 1863 was a trying time for General Grant. It was a winter of floods in the South, and a winter of discontent among the people of the North. He could not move his army, and many began the old cry after Donelson, "idle, incompetent, and unfit to command in an emergency," and again arose a clamor for



his removal. It was a season of false alarm and sensational rumors.

But there were two men in the land from whence came words of cheer. One was listening quietly in a store in Cincinnati to a great deal of rambling and grumbling talk about the way General Grant was trying to take Vicksburg. When all others present had given vent to their feelings, this man said in a moderate tone: "I think he'll take it. Yes, I know he'll take it. 'Lis' always did what he set out to do. 'Lis' is my boy, and he won't fail."

The other man who believed in General Grant was in the White House. He was too good to be unkind, and too wise and prudent to err. While men of large political influence were urging General Grant's removal for the good of the country, the philosopher at the White House said: "I rather like the man; I think we'll try him a little longer." By these thirteen words the fate of Vicksburg was sealed.

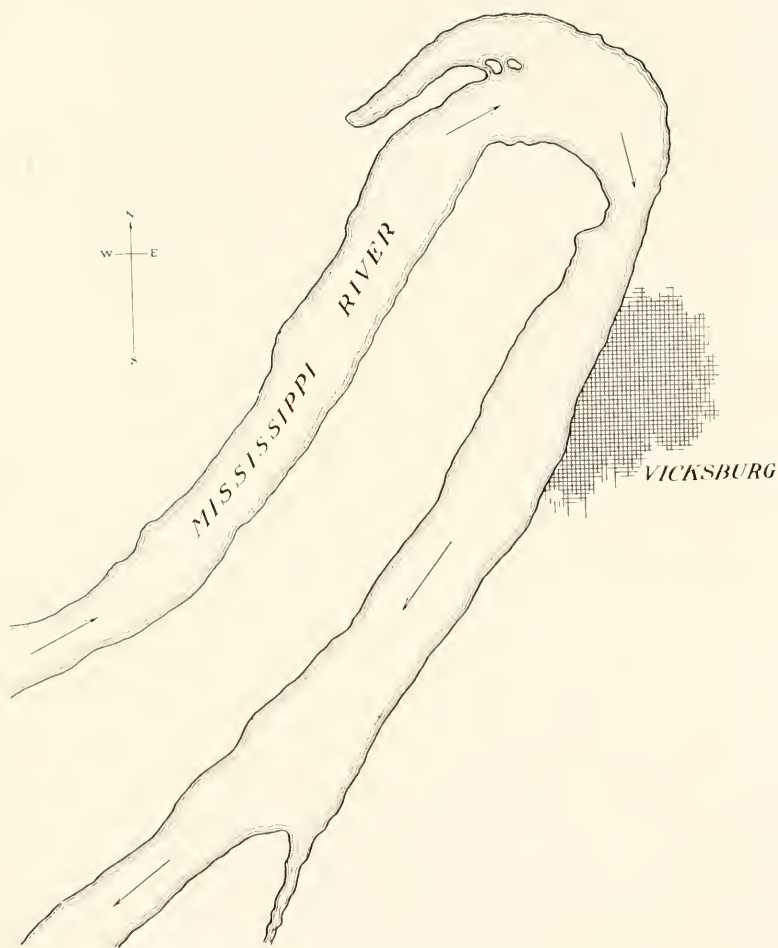
During this time of public discontent General Grant was quietly thinking out a scheme whereby gunboats, transports, and barges laden with supplies could run fourteen miles of batteries past Vicksburg and Grand Gulf. He had a mental map, or picture, of how the city could be taken; but he did not call to his assistance any of his generals nor even the members of his staff. Nothing could be gained by a council of war. The conception was too bold for their approval. Even Sherman, who was closer to General Grant in thought and friend-



ship than any other general, could not indorse the determination of his chief to defy the bristling batteries on the Vicksburg hills. It was not a "protest" against it as some authorities declare, but simply an opinion, that the saner plan to take the city was by a movement from the north. The coöperation of the navy would seem to be necessary, whatever plan might be adopted for the reduction of the Vicksburg forts, and therefore General Grant communicated to Admiral Porter his plan of campaign. The Admiral, whose fleet was in hiding not far from Young's Point above Vicksburg, was conscious of the fact that the part to be assigned to him would be one of the most hazardous naval manoeuvres of the war, or of any war in history; but having the fullest confidence in General Grant's judgment, he gave the plan his hearty indorsement.

To obtain a clear understanding of the great danger in attempting to run the batteries it must be explained that Vicksburg occupies the summit and slopes of a lofty range of hills about two hundred feet above the river. A short distance below Young's Point the Mississippi turns above the city and runs nearly four miles northeasterly, and then, in passing the city, takes a southwesterly course for nearly the same distance. At this sharp bend in the river where it begins its southward course, the great bluffs jut insolently out into the channel of the Mississippi. To General Grant, nothing seemed impossible; and "having cast the eye of desire upon this special spot, he began to advance upon it





SHOWING THE COURSE THE VESSELS TOOK  
IN RUNNING THE BLOCKADE.







in a silent, pertinacious way, which no men, and no intrenchments could permanently withstand."

When General Grant had determined to proceed against Vicksburg in the manner already outlined, he set on foot some stirring movements which were bewildering to his associates. He was trying a new system of fighting to conquer. He scratched the word "rest" out of his vocabulary, and seemed determined to move right on as if impelled by some power which he could not resist. He was bidding good-bye to the North. His base of supplies was to be abandoned. He was taking his troops, lightly equipped, into the enemy's country. The foe with which he could not escape battle was greater in number than his own army. It seemed to everybody who was looking on that he could not escape disaster. But the orders to move were issued at once, and the greatest siege in history began in earnest.

General McClelland, commanding the Thirteenth corps, led the advance of the army of about 32,000, and moved from Milliken's Bend on the 9th of March, 1863, and on the 6th of April he reached New Carthage. Parts of the corps of Sherman and McPherson—the Fifteenth and Seventeenth—were to follow McClelland in the order which had been determined by General Grant.

The General's orders for the movement of the troops over the untried and impeditive route showed how carefully he had thought out every detail of the march. He



noted minutely how the men should conduct themselves while marching and living off the country; and every necessary provision was made for the care of those who, in the strain of march, might fall by the wayside.

The boldest and most perilous and uncertain feature of this campaign was passing the murderous batteries which defended Vicksburg. The success of this movement depended wholly upon whether General Grant could get his fleet below the city. Without vessels on which his army could cross from the west to the east side of the river, the campaign would be an utter failure. The bravery of men and the strength of gunboats and transports were to be put to a supreme test. After most of the army had reached a point below Vicksburg by the overland route, on the Louisiana side, General Grant's plan for the movement of the fleet assumed definite shape; and on Wednesday, April 15th, he asked Admiral Porter: "Can I depend on you for a sufficient naval force to run the blockade?" "I will be ready to-morrow night," was the prompt answer. Each gunboat had taken for additional protection, baled cotton, railway iron, heavy timber, and huge chains.

So dangerous was the attempt to run the batteries with transports that General Grant resolved not to order any man to take part in the movement. The officers and crews of the gunboats belonging to the regular navy had no option in the matter, but it was otherwise with those engaged in the transport service.



Therefore volunteers from the army were called for, and a surprising number of men of nerve and patriotic ardor begged the privilege of risking their lives in the expedition. The General says that captains, pilots, mates, engineers, and deckhands presented themselves to take five times the number of vessels which were needed for the perilous voyage. One young man in the "Lead Mining regiment," raised in Representative Washburne's district, declined one hundred dollars in cash for his chance of risking his life in passing the belching guns at Vicksburg and Grand Gulf.

The first fleet selected to pass the batteries was composed of eight gunboats—Porter's flagship *Benton* taking the lead—and three transports carrying soldiers and provisions, and each towing a barge loaded with coal for the use of the gunboats. General Grant was on a transport, not connected with the blockade runners, that he might see how the fleet behaved, his boat being as far down the river as prudence would permit.

About ten o'clock on Thursday night, April 16th, Porter started down the river with his fleet, the utmost quiet prevailing, and his boats simply drifting with the current. There was a grand ball in Vicksburg that night, and the Admiral supposed the sound of revelry would favor him in getting his transports past the batteries. "As I looked back," says Porter, "at the long line I could compare them only to so many phantom vessels. Not a light was to be seen nor a sound heard throughout the fleet." Porter thought he was going to



slip by unnoticed. But just as he approached the river bend where the frowning heights were covered with heavy batteries, a bright light along the levee illuminated everything.

Porter's captain thought the town was on fire. "On the opposite side of the river was a large railway station with outbuildings, and as soon as the first fire broke out these also burst into flames. The upper fort opened its heavy guns upon the *Benton*, the shot rattling against her sides like hail, but she had four inches of iron plated over forty inches of oak, so that hardly any impression could be made upon her hull."

"It was one of the grandest scenes ever witnessed in war. It was the most daring of naval adventures, for upon its success depended, in a very large measure, the fate and reputation of General Grant, and of the army he commanded, and certainly the fate of Vicksburg. Admiral Porter says that from every fort and hill-top vomited forth shot and shell. The scene might have answered for a picture of the infernal regions. I stood on deck admiring it, while the captain fought his vessel, and the pilot steered her through fire and smoke as coolly as if he were performing an everyday duty."

This unparalleled adventure of the fleet, and the splendor of the scene, make it worth while to quote a few lines from an eye-witness who was too modest to give his name:

"Lights twinkled busily from the Vicksburg hill-sides until ten o'clock, when they disappeared. Then



a shapeless mass of what looked like a great fragment of darkness was discerned floating noiselessly down the river. It was the *Benton*. It was followed by another bank of darkness, then another, and thus they continued as if huge shadows detached themselves from the blackness above, floated across the vision, and disappeared in the darkness below. Ten of these noiseless shapes revealed themselves and disappeared.

“Three-quarters of an hour passed. People saw nothing save a long, low bank of darkness which, like a black fog, walled the view below, and joined the sky and river in the direction of Vicksburg. And all watched this gathering of blackness, for in it were thunders and lightnings and volcanoes which at any instant might light up the night with fierce eruptions. . . . At just quarter before eleven two bright, sharp lines of flame floated through the darkness at the extreme right of the Vicksburg batteries; and in an instant the whole length of the bluffs was ablaze with fire. The fleet had rounded the Point, and now lay squarely before the city, and at once responded by opening their ports and pouring their full broadside of twenty-five heavy guns charged with grape and shrapnel directly against the city.

“A great cloud of smoke rolled heavily over the gunboats, and in this the transports entered and made their ‘fast time’ down the river. But the cotton bales on the *Henry Clay* took fire from a Confederate shell, and soon became a blazing mass as it floated down the stream until it disappeared below Warrenton.”



The Vicksburg batteries were passed in one hour and a half, and the surprising feat was accomplished without the loss of a single life.

When Porter had passed the batteries he took his fleet to a point near New Carthage, a run of only a few miles. But with only two transports and two barges below Vicksburg, General Grant could not transfer his army expeditiously from the west to the east side of the river, and therefore he decided to start a second fleet past the batteries, to consist of six steamers such as were common on the Mississippi, and twelve barges. The officers and crews were chosen almost wholly from the regiments then in camp at Milliken's Bend. Again, General Grant purposed not to ask anyone to accompany the fleet on account of the hazardousness of the undertaking. But the loyalty and courage of the volunteers were illustrated by the fact that many times more officers and men tendered their services than the steamers could accommodate.

The time fixed for the moving of the second fleet was on Wednesday night, April 22nd. A painful expectation weighed on many hearts. There were no ironclad boats like Porter's *Benton* and *Lafayette* to guard the frail crafts or to give the volunteers who crowded the decks of the steamers a fair chance to save their lives. Generals Grant and Logan, with other officers and war correspondents, were sufficiently near on boats to observe the action of the fleet.



The steamers were to run ten or fifteen minutes apart. It was a little after ten o'clock when they took their positions in the line. Their engines were motionless, and with an impressive solemnity the voyage began after the moon had set and darkness had covered the waters of the Mississippi. It was about twelve o'clock when the first steamer in the fleet was discovered by the upper batteries. Then the dead silence of the night was broken by the roar of the heaviest guns of the fortifications. The river was soon illuminated by the burning of old buildings. "The batteries played heavily upon the transports, sending iron messengers after them when they had gotten fully two miles below the guns.

"Every two or three minutes would come a hull; then the roar would deepen and the batteries would crash through the night until the atmosphere and the land and the water shook. But slowly and quietly the boats moved down the river, and at half-past two o'clock in the morning the last of the fleet passed beyond the range of the batteries, and the night again became silent." Only one of the steamers was sunk, and seven of the barges which carried rations for the army passed by in safety.

With about 20,000 men below Vicksburg, General Grant made his headquarters at Perkins' plantation, some eight or ten miles in a straight course below New Carthage. He soon learned that the only place on the east side of the river at which he could safely land his



army was at Bruinsburg, eight miles below Grand Gulf—the latter being heavily fortified. There were only two ways opened to the General by which he could accomplish his purpose—either for Porter to silence the Grand Gulf batteries, in day time, or run the blockade with the gunboats and transports at night.

On Wednesday morning, April 29th, Porter brought his eight gunboats into service, and at close range began to hammer the enemy, but after five hours and a half of “as hard naval fighting as any that occurred during the war,” not a single Confederate gun was silenced. But the result did not discourage General Grant. In a quiet, confident tone he said to Porter: “I will run the batteries.” And under the cover of night the Grand Gulf blockade was passed by the entire fleet, composed of eight gunboats, seven transports, and several barges. Not a single life was lost in this perilous undertaking, and with all the fleet below the last of the enemy’s batteries, General Grant was in a position to ferry his army to the Mississippi shore and begin the movement to place it in the rear of Vicksburg.

In connection with this portion of the Vicksburg campaign is an incident of special value as it strikingly illustrates the military wisdom of General Grant. General John A. McClernand, commander of the Thirteenth Corps, was a brave officer, but was numbered among the “political generals.” He lacked the instinct of a true soldier, and his ambition was inordinate. Admiral Porter says that the General had so thoroughly



ingratiated himself with President Lincoln that he made him believe that he was the only general who could compel the fall of Vicksburg. So successful was McClernand in winning the confidence of the Administration, that in the autumn of 1862 the President had authorized him to go to Illinois and raise troops for the special purpose of capturing Vicksburg. Many men were enlisted under his persuasive eloquence, and his command of the Vicksburg expedition early in the winter of 1863 seemed assured. But fortunately, through the patience, sagacity, and generalship of Grant, McClernand never obtained a higher position in the army than commander of the Thirteenth Corps.

In the march of the army from Milliken's Bend to New Carthage General Grant gave McClernand the command of the right wing. As he was next in rank to himself he was entitled to this honor, all other things being equal; but the officers of the army and navy distrusted McClernand. General Grant, however, was always kind and considerate, and in assigning officers to various commands in the march below Vicksburg, it was his purpose not to give McClernand the slightest reason to complain of ill-treatment by the commanding general. But notwithstanding General Grant's great strategic movements thus far in the Vicksburg campaign, the Administration seemed to be in a state of doubt as to his fitness to command; and perhaps McClernand was responsible for this peculiar condition of mind at Washington.



When Admiral Porter was fighting the battle at Grand Gulf, three Commissioners were on board a tug with General Grant, witnessing the action. They were Elihu B. Washburne, member of Congress from the Galena (Ill.) district; Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois; and Lorenzo Thomas, Adjutant General of the United States Army. The Commissioners had personally met McClelland at his headquarters, and were honored "with a grand review and a good luncheon with champagne." But there was no spirit of blandishment or sycophancy in General Grant, and he could furnish the Commissioners with no such entertainment. The best he could do was to give them a place on his tug-boat, from which they could witness the exhibition of naval firing, which, for desperation, had been rarely paralleled in any war.

The authority conferred on the Commissioners by President Lincoln was to inquire carefully into the affairs of the army commanded by General Grant, and if after such an inquisition they concluded that a change ought to be made, they might relieve the commanding General and put McClelland in his place. Adjutant General Thomas took Admiral Porter into his confidence and told him that he brought with him from Washington a document which gave him authority to perform this service for the President. Porter asked whom he proposed to put in General Grant's place. Thomas answered: "That depends; McClelland is prominent."



The Admiral replied: "Don't let your plans get out, for if the army and navy should find out what these three gentlemen came here for, they would be tarred and feathered, and neither Grant nor myself could prevent it." "Is it possible?" exclaimed Thomas. "But nothing has been done. We are delighted with what we have seen."

When Adjutant General Thomas returned to Washington he conferred with the President immediately, reported what they had seen and what they thought best not to do, and the document which provided for the removal of Grant went into the waste basket. Grant kept on fighting, in every instance victorious, but McClelland was disappointed of his hopes; and only a few weeks later his enforced retirement from his command was a natural sequence.



## XXIII.

### THE WONDERS OF THE INVESTMENT OF VICKSBURG.



ON the 30th of April, 1863, McClelland's command and a portion of McPherson's corps made a landing on the east side of the Mississippi. Grand Gulf was immediately abandoned by the Confederates, and for a short time General Grant made it his base of supplies. It was with astonishing rapidity that with an army of hardly more than 20,000 strong (Sherman's command not having arrived), and confronted by an enemy twice his own strength, General Grant began the land movement for the investment of Vicksburg. General G. F. R. Henderson, of the British army, emphasizes the fact in his *Science of War* that General Grant was the first to perceive that in a comparatively fertile country it was possible to subsist an army without magazines or a base of supplies; and was thereby able to invest



Vicksburg, marching completely around the place and defeating all the troops that opposed him.

Of the beginning of this extraordinary movement, the Hon. E. B. Washburne says: "When Grant left his headquarters at Smith's plantation (a short distance above New Carthage on the Louisiana side) to enter on the greatest campaign in history, he did not take with him the trappings and paraphernalia so common among military men. All depended on the quickness of the movement. It was important that he should be encumbered with as little baggage as possible. He took with him no orderly, nor horse, nor a servant, nor an overcoat, nor a camp chest, nor even a clean shirt. His entire baggage for the six days—I was with him at that time—was a tooth-brush! He fared like the commonest soldier in his command, partaking of his rations and sleeping on the ground with no covering except the canopy of heaven."

The first battle in this inland campaign was fought at Port Gibson on Friday, May 1st. General McClelland's command was the first to strike the enemy, and sharp fighting lasted all the day; but when McPherson's corps came on the field the Confederates were compelled to retreat before a largely superior number.

On the 8th of May General Grant was reinforced by two divisions from Sherman's command, which had remained above Vicksburg, this addition augmenting his strength to 32,000. With this force, in a flying campaign, he was to contend with Pemberton and Jo-



seph E. Johnston, whose united strength was estimated at from 40,000 to 50,000. In moving towards Jackson, fifty miles east of Vicksburg, General Grant purposely took a line of march which would make him clash with the enemy. As the farmer's wife spreads out her apron to drive a brood of chickens into a coop, General Grant decided to spread out his army around the rear of the enemy and shoo him into Vicksburg. It was an admirable programme—never before heard of in war.

On the 12th of May General McPherson inflicted a galling defeat on the enemy at Raymond. The army was moving eastward on different roads, under various subordinate commanders, and when General Grant heard of McPherson's victory, he threw as much of his force as could be spared on Jackson, the capital of the state. The attack was made on Tuesday, May 14th, but Johnston, shunning a conflict with General Grant, rapidly retreated northward. The *Richmond Whig* of May 18th, in a plaintive mood said: "The loss of Jackson is a painful and disastrous event; and for the present Grant is making things look ugly."

With Johnston out of Jackson, and its factories for making military supplies in ashes, General Grant pushed a portion of his army to Champion's Hill, twenty miles west from the capital. Here, on the 16th of May, was fought the hardest and bloodiest battle connected with the movement against Vicksburg. Fifteen thousand federals were engaged, and the attack was so vigorous and persistent that Pemberton was compelled



to retreat to the Big Black river, only ten miles from the city which General Grant so much coveted. On Sunday, the 17th, the battle of Big Black was fought and won, eighteen cannon and 2,000 prisoners being captured. "When the battle was in progress," says the General, "an officer from Banks came up and presented me a letter from Halleck, dated May 11th. It had been sent by the way of New Orleans to Banks to be forwarded to me. It ordered me to return to Grand Gulf and to coöperate against Port Hudson, and then to return with our combined forces to besiege Vicksburg. I told the officer that the order came too late, and that Halleck would not give it now if he knew our position. The bearer of the dispatch insisted that I ought to obey the order, and was giving arguments to support his position, when I heard great cheering to the right of our line, and, looking in that direction, I saw General Lawler, in his shirt sleeves, leading a charge. I immediately mounted my horse and galloped in that direction, and saw no more of the officer who delivered the dispatch, I think not even to this day."

The boldness of General Grant's manoeuvres is not more remarkable than the skill and good fortune with which he struck the forces of the enemy successively in detachments as they came in his way, and there was not a straggling battle among them. He kept his own army in fighting trim and on the move almost day and night, and completely bewildered the enemy as well as defeated him in battle whether large or small. It was



a culmination of successes of such splendor and combined such solid advantages—so various and important—that political thinkers and military critics, as well as the popular heart, were not only fascinated but roused to enthusiasm.

In seventeen days from the time General Grant landed his troops below Vicksburg, he fought and won five battles, captured 27 heavy cannon, 61 pieces of artillery, and 6,000 prisoners. His own loss was only 690 killed and 3,400 wounded. He marched over two hundred miles, and had so confused the Confederate commanders that they were unable to unite their forces thereafter. His whole movement was so thorough, emphatic, and brilliant as to furnish a striking contrast to what was going on where the great army of the East was supposed to be moving.

It was on the 18th of May, the day after Big Black, that the two comrades—Grant and Sherman—stood on Walnut Hills, northward from Vicksburg, overlooking the city. To Sherman the scene revived impressive, if not sad memories. He was looking down on the place at which he made his disastrous assault in the previous December. But now, confident that the city would fall, he could say with full satisfaction to Grant, "This ends one of the greatest campaigns in history." And two weeks later, on the same hilltops, when several state officials from the North were visiting General Grant, in an animated conversation on the glories of the achievement, Sherman declared to them,



“Grant is entitled to every bit of the credit for this campaign. I opposed it; I wrote him a letter about it.” But General Grant was not to be outdone in frankness and fairness by his friend Sherman, and afterwards he wrote this acknowledgment from the fulness of his heart: “But for this speech, it is not likely that Sherman’s opposition would have ever been heard of. His untiring energy and great efficiency during the campaign entitle him to a full share of all the credit due for its success. He could not have done more if the plan had been his own.”

One of the great crises of the war in the West was decided when Pemberton, with his 30,000 men, sought refuge behind the breastworks at Vicksburg. General Grant’s steady, persistent marching and fighting from Port Gibson to Big Black, was to make the Confederate general seal his own fate by doing exactly what he did. Thus having got Pemberton where he could do no harm, General Grant immediately began to arrange his forces for the complete investment of the city. The line of defense which the Confederates were obliged to maintain was seven miles long, and was in crescent form. The Union line of offense was between twelve and fifteen miles in length, and stretched from Haines’ Bluff on the north to a point south near Warrenton on the Mississippi. Gullies, deep ravines, steep hills, and other obstructions were so numerous that the approach of an invading army from the east was made very difficult. But as early as May 19th, before the city was



fully invested, General Grant ordered an assault chiefly on the northern part of the line. The assault was made at this time on the supposition that after Pemberton's terrible defeat at Champion's Hill and Big Black, he could not make a strong defense. But in this movement General Grant was disappointed, as the only advantage secured was a more advanced position in a few places. The assaults on May 22nd were also without a compensating benefit, except perhaps that they established the fact that the only method by which the city could be captured with a minimum loss of life was the substitution of the pick and spade for the bayonet.

The reason for making the assault on the afternoon of the 22nd, for which General Grant has been severely and unjustly criticised, should receive a clearer explanation than is made in the *Memoirs* or by several of his biographers.

The General was not satisfied with the assault on the 19th of May, and he determined to make a second attempt to break through the enemy's line of intrenchments. The assault was ordered to be made at ten o'clock A. M. on the 22nd, in which the whole line, from north to south, should be engaged. "While the attack was a gallant one," says Grant, "and portions of each of three corps succeeded in getting up to the very parapets of the enemy, and in planting their battle-flags upon them, at no place were we able to enter."

It was immediately after this assault was made that



General Grant lost hope of being able to achieve any satisfactory result by charging upon the enemy's works. But in a few minutes after the assault had been made, and while Generals Grant and Sherman were conversing on the situation of affairs, the former received a message from General McClermand, commanding the Thirteenth Corps, which said that his "troops had captured the rebel parapet in his front, and that the flag of the Union was waving over the stronghold of Vicksburg." In the same message he urged General Grant "to give orders to Sherman and McPherson to press their attacks on their respective fronts, lest the enemy should concentrate on him" (McClermand). But General Grant, who had previously reconnoitered McClermand's front, said to Sherman, "I don't believe a word of it." But General Sherman insisted that as the note was in McClermand's handwriting, and therefore official, it must be credited, and he offered "to renew the assault at once with new troops." So insistent was McClermand for reinforcements that, a few minutes later, he sent a second note to General Grant, who, feeling that he could not ignore it, sent Quimby's division of the Seventeenth Corps, and Sherman and McPherson were ordered to renew the assault at three o'clock. Precisely at the hour and minute named by General Grant, the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Corps began the assault upon the enemy's works as a diversion in favor of McClermand. Furious charges were made at three distinct points; but mortal man could not stand before the storm of bullets which



came from the parapets, and the assault, so bloody, and so heroically made, was of no avail.

These assaults revealed the fact that McClelland's note to General Grant that he had captured a rebel parapet and that the Union flag waved over the stronghold of Vicksburg, was untrue. But wishing to justify his strange conduct on the afternoon of the 22nd, McClelland issued a proclamation to his corps, which was full of self-flattery and injustice to the other corps. In effect it charged that if Sherman and McPherson had obeyed General Grant's orders in making the assault, the enemy would not have been allowed to mass his forces against the Thirteenth Corps. The proclamation was published in the *St. Louis Democrat* on the 10th of June, and in the *Memphis Bulletin* on the 13th; and when copies reached the army before Vicksburg, General Grant sent the following dispatch to Halleck on June 19th:

"I have found it necessary to relieve General McClelland, particularly at this time, for his publication of a congratulatory address calculated to create dissension and ill-feeling in the army. I should have relieved him long since for his general unfitness for his position."

After the assault of the 22nd, the work of forcing Vicksburg to capitulate consisted of the routine of digging rifle pits by night and occupying them by day, with an occasional "scrap" with the enemy, pushing the lines closer and closer, and mining and countermining, with now and then an explosion. It was wearisome work at best, and oftentimes painful, but the prize



was always in sight, and the army did not complain. In front of the enemy's fortifications were between 40,000 and 50,000 Union troops, and along the twelve miles or more of rifle pits were planted 220 pieces of artillery.

The most marvellous factor in this extraordinary military movement was General Grant himself. He stood alone in its bold conception; and when he got all his troops in front of the enemy's works, in his own quiet way he studied the operations from one end of the line to the other. He did not say much to the outside world of what was going on within his lines. It was this personal characteristic of saying little and doing much that led President Lincoln to tell General Burnside that Grant was "a copious worker and fighter, but a meager writer and telegrapher."

During the siege many incidents occurred daily which illustrated General Grant's astonishing equipoise, confidence, and courage, and also the close personal attention he gave to numerous details. One of these incidents was given me by General Logan, which I use as a preface to his own conclusion at the time, regarding General Grant's faith in himself. In front of Logan's division some columbiads were being mounted, and General Grant desired to superintend the operation. During the preliminary work he mounted the epaulement, and, heedless of the danger from the thickly flying bullets and shells from the enemy's works, he calmly and slowly whittled at a rail until the guns were placed



in a position to suit him. It was such a surprising exhibition of self-control and courage that General Logan added: "It did seem to me from this incident, and from the ease and confidence with which he planned and directed that whole campaign, that if Lincoln had said to him: 'Put down the rebellion in twelve months,' Grant would not have hesitated to take the contract!"

No unwall'd city could long endure the hardship and hopelessness of such a siege. From the mortar boats bombs and shells flew with hideous shrieking through the night air, bursting over the homes of the terrified inhabitants. Day after day and night after night General Grant tightened his grip on the city by pressing his lines closer and closer to the fortifications. Pemberton's position was hopeless from the start, but he did not seem to see the inevitable hour until after six weeks, when his people began to plead for bread and he had completely lost all power to make further defense.

It was on Friday morning, July 3d, when, in a sullen state of mind, Pemberton sent a flag of truce to General Grant, asking the appointment of commissioners to arrange terms of surrender. But the General did not favor this proposal, and for good reason. Of course he advised with his generals, but with the reservation that he must hold in his own hand the right of deciding upon the terms on which the surrender should be made. As he had been held personally responsible for victory or defeat in every campaign in



which he was chief in command since he entered the volunteer army, he determined to stand by his own convictions. And perhaps the old saying that councils of war never fight, suggested to him that neither commissioners nor a council would in any way change his mind.

Hardly any two accounts agree in all the details relating to the meeting of Generals Grant and Pemberton. It was an impressive, as well as a momentous hour; and it is difficult to determine which account is entitled to the most credit. But as the correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial* was an eye-witness to the scene, and was regarded as a faithful chronicler, I quote three paragraphs from him. General Grant having declined to accept Pemberton's proposition to appoint commissioners, as well as to call a council of war, the correspondent says:

"General Pemberton then requested a personal interview, which was permitted by Grant at three o'clock Friday afternoon. The latter with his staff appeared on the hills where our advance works were. Here they halted. Pemberton was accompanied by General Bowen and Colonel Montgomery. On the crest of the opposite hills were rifle pits and forts crowded with men. In the spaces in a grove of fruit trees met the contending heroes. Thousands of soldiers looked upon this strange scene. Two men who had been lieutenants in Mexico, now met as foes with all the world looking upon them.



"Colonel Montgomery spoke: 'General Grant, General Pemberton.' They shook hands politely. But it was evident that Pemberton was mortified. He said: 'When I was at Monterey and Buena Vista, we had terms and conditions there.'

"Grant then took him aside. They sat down on the grass and talked for more than an hour. Grant smoked all the time and Pemberton played with the grass and pulled leaves; and finally Grant agreed to parole the Confederates, allowing each officer to take his horse."\*

The details of the conversation between the conqueror and the vanquished foe will probably never be fully known. No biographer of General Grant and no member of his military family heard a word of what passed between them; and neither the General nor

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\*AUTHOR'S NOTE:—In my journal of Friday evening July 3d, 1863, I made the following note . . . "At 8 o'clock this morning hundreds of rebels were seen standing on their fortifications. Both armies laid down their arms. About noon I went with part of my company (H. 33d Wis.) near the enemy's fort, which was hardly more than 200 yards from our line, and there the blue and the gray chatted pleasantly for a full hour. The meeting was so unrestrained and amicable as to make the scene exceedingly interesting and touching as well. My boys gave the contents of their haversacks to the rebels whom they had been fighting for nearly forty days and nights, and the defenders of the city deeply appreciated the kindness."

And on Saturday the 4th: "This has been a day of great excitement. The morning dawned with as much quietness as if it were Sunday in the North. How strange it seemed, this silence after such a long and roaring siege! White flags were raised upon every Confederate fort. In the morning a national salute was fired with blank cartridge by all the cannon on the line, and continued for some time. And what a roar of thunder! If all the artillery of heaven had combined in one grand outburst of sound it could not have surpassed this salute at Vicksburg. Perhaps nothing equal to it was ever heard before or will ever be heard again on any battlefield."



Pemberton ever made public any part of the conversation.

The dread of going North, and the fear of harsh treatment, are said to have deterred the Confederates from capitulating earlier in the siege. The exercise of magnanimity and charity was as natural to General Grant as breathing; and he demonstrated on this occasion that the hand that wielded the sword was moved by kindness as well as by patriotism. The prisoners of war, who so long lived in hunger, now received abundant rations. So much kindness was shown them that when the Union troops entered the city, both sides "fraternized as if they had been fighting for the same cause." And when the Confederates passed out of town between two lines of Federal soldiers, the scene was solemn and pathetic. Under instruction from General Grant, not a cheer or a word came from the conquerors that would humiliate the fallen foe or give them pain.

When the terms of surrender were agreed upon, General Grant displayed no pride of feeling. His demeanor on the 4th was remarkably modest. Instead of receiving the surrender of the army and the city in person, he bestowed that conspicuous honor upon General McPherson, his youngest corps commander. On that auspicious day General Grant rode into the city and witnessed the raising of the stars and stripes on the court house, by the Forty-fifth Illinois.

While the news of the surrender was hailed with joyful acclaim and with one universal cheer for the



victor, it is interesting and impressive to turn from the pomp and circumstance of a great victory to an incident that reveals the character of the real Grant, which I give as Admiral Porter records it: "When the Union flag was hoisted on the ramparts of Vicksburg, my flagship and every vessel of the fleet steamed up or down the river to the levee before the city. We discovered a dust in the distance, and in a few moments Grant, at the head of nearly all his generals with their staffs, rode up to the gangway, and dismounting, came on board. That was a happy meeting, a great hand-shaking and general congratulations. . . . There was one man in the party who preserved the same quiet demeanor that he **always** bore whether in adversity or in victory, and that was General Grant. No one, to see him sitting there with that calm exterior, amidst all the jollity, and without any staff, would ever have taken him for the great general who had accomplished one of the most stupendous military feats on record.

"There was a quiet satisfaction in his face that could not be concealed, but he behaved on that occasion as if nothing of importance had occurred. He was the only one in that assemblage who did not touch the simple wine offered him. He contented himself with a cigar; and let me say here that this was his habit during all the time he commanded before Vicksburg, and also while he commanded before Richmond."

In the great shower of congratulatory messages which came to the General immediately after the siege,



the one which impressed him most was sent by President Lincoln. It was dated at Washington, July 16th, 1863, the full text of which is given:

"MY DEAR GENERAL: I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable services you have done the country.

"I wish to say further: When you reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did—march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like would succeed.

"When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks; and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make a personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong."

The capture of Vicksburg included 29,500 men, 172 cannon, and 60,000 muskets; and probably never before was so great a victory won at so small a cost of life. But the capture of men and guns did not count most in this victory. The moral effect was almost immeasurable. The whole country felt the inspiring event. The rebellion in the West had reached its crisis. General Edward P. Alexander of the Confederate army thought the Vicksburg campaign the most brilliant strategy of the whole war. Other battles were to be fought and won; but it was from Vicksburg that the Confederacy heard the crack of doom.



## XXIV.

### CHICKAMAUGA IS AVENGED AT CHATTANOOGA.



GENERAL GRANT spent a few weeks at Vicksburg after the surrender, ostensibly to take rest, which he so much needed, but during this temporary relief from field duty he found time to make mental maps of the situation eastward and southward. It was during this relaxation from the immediate charge of a campaign that he was commissioned a major general in the regular army, which greatly enlarged his powers and vastly increased his responsibility. At that time he desired to organize an expedition against Mobile, capture the city, and place that section of the South under Federal control; but such a campaign seemed impracticable to Halleck and Stanton, who interposed an objection which proved a serious blunder and was a sore disappointment to General Grant.

During the latter part of August, 1863, the General



went to New Orleans for the purpose of conferring with General Banks, and returning from a review of the troops near Carrolton, a few miles from the city, his horse became frightened at a passing locomotive, and he was thrown to the ground with such violence as to render him unconscious for several hours. The General was placed in a hotel, where he remained over a week, his suffering much of the time being almost beyond endurance. He was finally taken to Vicksburg by boat, where he remained helpless for many days.

While the General was confined to his bed in New Orleans, Halleck telegraphed him to send reinforcements to Rosecrans, who was operating against Bragg in Tennessee and northern Georgia. Telegraphic communication between Washington and New Orleans was in such a wretched condition that the dispatches were delayed two weeks, and in the meantime the battle between Bragg and Rosecrans had been fought at Chickamauga (Sept. 19-20), and the Union forces were driven into Chattanooga.

The loss of the battle caused a demoralization of Rosecrans' army. Both Lincoln and Halleck were nearly frantic at the situation of affairs at Chattanooga, as Bragg was threatening to besiege the city. A great battle must yet be fought. The question uppermost in the mind of everybody who understood the perilous condition of the army was: "Who must fight and win the battle?" Rosecrans could not be considered, be-



cause his usefulness as a commander ended at Chickamauga.

Circumstances demanded a new leader. Washington was looking to General Grant. He had genius and nerve, which could not be said of any other commander of a department. He was a tonic to the people and to the Administration. Chattanooga must be saved, because it was the gateway to the sea. So thoroughly did the Administration begin to believe in General Grant, that, while at Vicksburg, unable to walk without assistance, he received this significant message from Halleck: "It is the wish of the Secretary of War that as soon as General Grant is able he will come to Cairo and report by telegraph." As early as possible he departed for Cairo, and on the 17th of October he received a dispatch at Cairo directing him to repair to Louisville, the route being by rail by the way of Indianapolis.

The confidence of Lincoln and Stanton in Grant as a succor in time of trouble is splendidly illustrated in the fact that when he reached Indianapolis and took the train for Louisville, he met the Secretary of War, and together they proceeded to that city. Stanton had gone all the way from Washington to the West to have a personal interview with the General. They had never met before. When on the train, the Secretary gave Grant two documents of vital import. They created the military division of the Mississippi, giving Grant the command of the departments of the Ohio, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee, the largest individual command in



the army, and including all the territory from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi north of the limits of Banks' command. There was only this difference in the documents—"one left the department commanders as they were, while the other relieved Rosecrans and assigned Thomas to his place."

Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana was at Chattanooga immediately after the battle of Chickamauga; and from that point he telegraphed General Grant at Louisville to the effect that unless prevented, Rosecrans would retreat, and he advised the issuing of peremptory orders against such a movement. Thomas, whom Garfield called the "Rock of Chickamauga," and who saved the left wing of the army from destruction in that battle, was considered by General Grant the safer general in time of great emergency, and therefore he gave him the command of the Cumberland.

No general in the army was less influenced by prejudice than General Grant. Considering the large number of subordinates of widely varying temperaments and opinions with whom he was associated, very few forfeited his confidence or incurred his displeasure. It was natural in him to overlook unintentional errors, but he could not condone inexcusable blunders. At one time he became impatient because of the weakness of one of his generals, and he asked the authorities at Washington to relieve the officer "until all danger had passed." It was this feeling of distrust toward Rose-



crans that led General Grant to prefer Thomas when a great battle was inevitable.

When General Grant and Secretary Stanton arrived at Louisville, the former sent to Thomas the notable message: "Hold Chattanooga at all hazards. I will be there as soon as possible." The brave soldier who had been the rock of defense on the left at Chickamauga, flashed back the inspiring answer: "We will hold the town till we starve." Although General Grant was yet in a crippled condition, his purpose to relieve Chattanooga at the earliest day possible was as determined as his courage and physical endurance were sublime; and on the 20th of October, 1863, he started for the besieged city where the soldiers were facing starvation.

It was a strange sight, and deeply pathetic, to see General Grant, painfully lame, feeble from weeks of great suffering, hurried off to Chattanooga, to amend—so far as such a thing was within human power—the blunder of the War Department in having made it necessary to fight the ill-fated battle of Chickamauga. No one in the West, or in Washington for that matter, had so clear a conception of the most effective way of crippling the Confederacy in the West and South as General Grant. As it has already been intimated, he had his military eye on Mobile. He had studied thoroughly the situation in all parts of the West and South. He believed firmly that the next best movement of his well-organized Vicksburg army was to attack Mobile



with the coöperation of the navy. This would compel Bragg to withdraw his forces from Tennessee and northern Georgia for the defense of Mobile, and there he would entrap himself as Pemberton had done at Vicksburg. But as clear and practical as was this movement, he was overruled by Halleck and Stanton, and the army which did such splendid service in the great siege was scattered hither and thither, and a part of the penalty of this shortsightedness of the War Office was the inglorious defeat at Chickamauga.

It was far in the night when General Grant reached Nashville, but before retiring he sent important orders to Sherman at Eastport, to Admiral Porter at Cairo, to Burnside, who was hemmed in at Knoxville, and to Thomas at Chattanooga. No mistake of Rosecrans, no difficulty at Chattanooga, no impairment of the facilities by which the besieged army in that city could be rationed clouded his conception of how the campaign against Bragg could be successfully conducted. "It was the small man on crutches" against the astute and robust Bragg and his beleaguering army.

Chattanooga is one hundred miles south-east of Nashville. The nearest railway point to Chattanooga was Bridgeport, forty miles west. General Grant rode that distance mostly on horseback, and when it became dangerous for him to cross overflowing streams or wash-outs, soldiers carried their uncomplaining commander in their arms. It was a journey of forty miles over many dangerous passages, particularly over the moun-



tains, but not discouraged by hardships nor overcome by physical debility, he pushed on to Chattanooga and reached General Thomas on the evening of October 23rd.

General O. O. Howard, who had been ordered from the East with the Eleventh corps to take part in the impending battle, met General Grant at Bridgeport, and records this impression of him: "As I stepped into the forward part of the car, General Grant, sitting near the rear end, was pointed out to me, and I passed on at once to pay my respects. Imagine my surprise when I saw him. He had been for some time before the public the successful commander in important battles; the newspapers had said much for him, and several virulent sheets had said much against him; and so, judging by the accounts, I had conceived him to be of very large size and of rough appearance. The actual man was quite different; not larger than McClellan, at that time rather thin in flesh, and pale in complexion, and noticeably self-constrained and retiring. . . .

"The General and I shared a wall tent between us. He had a humorous expression which I noticed as his eye fell upon a liquor flask hanging against the tent wall. 'That flask is not mine,' I quickly said. 'It was left here by an officer to be returned to Chattanooga. I never drink.' 'Neither do I,' was his prompt reply; and the reply was not in sport."

When General Grant arrived at Chattanooga he found a deplorable state of affairs; but his presence soon



caused the dejected army to brace up and take courage. The men seemed to take it for granted that wherever the General went, food and victory soon followed. The facilities for rationing the army were lamentable, the soldiers living in almost constant hunger. He put vigor in his effort to open the "cracker line" from Nashville to Chattanooga, and in five days after his arrival, the troops were praising God and cheering their new commander for the abundance of good rations.

In a valley on the south side of the Tennessee river lies Chattanooga. Eastward from the city is Missionary Ridge, rising 500 or 600 feet above the river, and running in a southerly direction. Southwestward is Lookout Mountain, 2,400 feet high, jutting insolently almost against the river. From its summit six or seven states can be seen by the aid of field glasses. Upon part of the summit of Lookout Mountain, as upon Missionary Ridge, the enemy was well intrenched, Bragg having occupied both ranges immediately after Rosecrans passed them by in his retreat from Chickamauga. Between the Ridge and the Mountain is Orchard Knob, then a steep, craggy knoll, 100 feet high, and this also was held by the enemy. Thus, with a force of 40,000 or 50,000 men Bragg had fortified the east, south, and west, a distance of twelve miles, which placed the little city in the valley of the Cumberland in a besieged condition, and to all appearance, at the mercy of the enemy.

This was the situation of affairs on the arrival of



General Grant, October 23rd. But despite his physical exhaustion, he had been formulating plans for some days for fighting one of the most dramatic and picturesque battles of the war. There was something inspiring in General Grant's masterly organization and command of the army at Chattanooga. He was not only the master of the whole field, but he was master of all his powers. He brought Sherman and his troops by a forced march from Iuka, 200 miles away. Instinctively he knew to what use he could put Sherman, when on the 15th of November he reached the north side of the Tennessee facing Missionary Ridge. Hooker's two corps, the Eleventh and Twelfth, under the command of Howard and Slocum respectively, were transplanted from the Potomac to the front of Lookout Mountain, twelve hundred miles in seven days, and formed the right wing of the army in the coming battle. Thomas was in the center with the Army of the Cumberland. With him General Grant established headquarters, and from this position he commanded the movement of an army of 60,000 which confronted the enemy's line of twelve miles.

Bragg was so well fortified at every point in front of the Union forces that Jefferson Davis, standing on the heights of Lookout Mountain a few days before the battle, beheld with a feeling of pride which he could not conceal, the magnificent scene before him. He saw the Federal army at his feet, as it were; and in his mind it could not scale the Ridge nor the Mountain,



nor pass southward between them; and turning to Bragg he said the army could not escape capture or destruction. Looking through Confederate glasses it certainly seemed that any attempt of General Grant to carry the Ridge and Mountain fortifications would result in an overwhelming defeat.

Whether Bragg was encouraged by the words of Mr. Davis or prompted by a spirit of bluster is not material, but on the 20th of November he sent the following note of warning to General Grant under a flag of truce: "As there may still be some non-combatants in Chattanooga, I deem it proper to notify you that prudence would dictate their early withdrawal." General Brown, the bearer of the note, was confident enough to say that he was willing and ready to stake the fate of the Confederacy on the single battle at Chattanooga, and in this statement he no doubt expressed the sentiment of Bragg. But this was as sounding brass to General Grant. He smiled when he read the note, and putting it in his pocket without making any reply, proceeded with a plan of battle which would insure the safety of all non-combatants in the city.

General Grant at Chattanooga is a study of special interest. He was there at the urgent request of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton. In fact, he was there to retrieve the "flood of ruin" by which Bragg caused the right wing of Rosecrans' army to be swept from the field of Chickamauga. Perhaps more than at any other time thus far in the Civil War, the eye of



the nation was focussed upon General Grant. His responsibility was enormous. The difficulties before him seemed almost insurmountable. Could he meet the expectation of the people and the government? At Donelson, his forethought, dash and courage won the first decisive battle of the war. At Shiloh, his terrible will, determined purpose, and astonishing physical and mental endurance saved his army from defeat on Sunday, which made victory certain on Monday. At Vicksburg, his genius, strategy, and persistence made the siege foremost among all the successful operations of the kind in the world's history. Could he forge another link to the chain of victories by winning at Chattanooga? Some wonderful generalship must be displayed and miraculous fighting done to save his army from defeat, and the nation from disappointment. Was General Grant the man above all others to command the western army at such a supreme moment?

The battle of Chattanooga began on Monday, November 23rd, 1863. General Grant's station was at Fort Wood, a short distance northward from Orchard Knob. He and Thomas made a reconnoissance, and on that day the center line, of which Thomas was in command, moved forward, and without much loss captured Orchard Knob which overlooked the enemy's rifle pits, and from this point General Grant directed the battle to its finish. On the 24th Sherman, upon whom it is said fell the weight of the battle, crossed to the south side of the Tennessee, and by nightfall had



taken his position at the lower edge of the north end of Missionary Ridge. On the same day the gallant Hooker assaulted the west side of the lofty, rugged, and precipitous Lookout Mountain. The men advanced steadily—not much in order—but with a determination to reach the crest of Lookout. Fog covered the mountain part of the day, but this did not lessen the zeal nor impede the progress of Hooker's forces. They advanced courageously up the deeply furrowed slope, and pushing through misty rain and dark clouds, by nightfall the Union flag was carried to the top of the mountain. The persistent climbing and firing of Hooker's men started the enemy on a retreat. Many prisoners were taken, and the fifty cannon Rosecrans lost at Chickamauga, and twelve pieces beside, were captured. It was a unique battle, and little wonder that Quartermaster General Meigs, who witnessed the gallantry of the mountain climbers as much as the dense fog would permit, called it "the battle above the clouds."

The wise and invincible Sherman, in whom General Grant's confidence was never misplaced, had a hard task before him. The climbing of the north end of Missionary Ridge, while not as rough as the west side of Lookout Mountain, was nevertheless difficult because the enemy was massing all his available forces against him. For Bragg to lose the Ridge was to lose everything; therefore the hardest pressing Sherman ever had in battle was at Missionary Ridge. On Tuesday, the 24th, it seemed as if he were being strained beyond the



power of endurance to hold his own, but General Grant's eye was on Sherman, and to make his position secure for the day, Howard, with his Eleventh corps, was dispatched to his assistance.

At midnight on Tuesday, after giving the situation thorough study, General Grant began to issue orders for the battle on Wednesday—the fatal day to Bragg. When Hooker secured the top of Lookout Mountain, Bragg withdrew his troops during the night and formed a new line on Missionary Ridge. From Orchard Knob General Grant could plainly see the purpose of Bragg, which was to mass his forces against Sherman. The larger part of Hooker's men being no longer needed on Lookout Mountain were ordered to cross Chattanooga Valley and join the right of the Union forces in a grand assault on Missionary Ridge, but the loss of a bridge on which Hooker was to cross Chattanooga Creek delayed him three hours.

The complex plan of the battle which General Grant had made, had thus far been executed with remarkable exactness. Every movement of the enemy had been closely watched from Orchard Knob. His anxiety was increased because of Hooker's delay. Sherman was being hard pushed. Column after column was being hurled against him. The overwhelming mass of Confederates in his front, and the concentrated fire of their guns, made his position exceedingly trying and doubtful. But despite all this Grant was holding his own. He saw clearly what was going on.



There is a moment in every great battle which determines the victory. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. General Grant could no longer wait for Hooker. Bragg had done what the General expected him to do—weakened his center to crush Sherman. It was time to hurl the thunderbolt. At the signal of six guns, 20,000 Union men moved majestically forward to Missionary Ridge. The lower rifle pits of the enemy were carried. But there was one feature of General Grant's magnificent plan in fighting the battle that miscarried. When the charge had been made on the pits, it was his purpose to have the troops reform preparatory to the general charge up the Ridge. But when the pits were captured each man seemed to be his own commander. Inspired by the success at the base of the Ridge the men rushed onward without order in the face of destructive fire from the enemy's batteries. When General Grant saw this marvellous exhibition of courage and determination he ordered the right and the left to move forward. Then all semblance of lines was lost; each of the brigades was broken into some half a dozen groups headed by a flag, and everyone struggling to reach the summit. Phil Sheridan commanded a division, and while storming the Ridge his horse was shot; and according to tradition the General mounted a captured cannon to give him elevation that he might see what his men were doing. All along the craggy slope of the Ridge was a hand-to-hand conflict, and the



roar of the cannon from both sides added to the excitement and sublimity of the hour.

During this stirring scene Grant and Thomas were standing together on Orchard Knob. The assaulting column had reached half-way to the summit of Missionary Ridge when a portion of it was momentarily brought to a halt. The stream of wounded began to retire down the hill which made the broken line look ragged and weak. "At that moment Thomas turned to General Grant, and in a voice which betrayed the emotion that raged within him, said: 'General, I—I'm afraid they won't get up.' Grant, with calmness, gazed at the column, and then brushing the ashes from the end of his cigar, said quietly, 'Oh, give 'em time, General,' and then as coolly returned his cigar to his mouth. The men got there."

The enemy could not long withstand the terrible assault of the Union forces, and finally the summit of Missionary Ridge, extending five or six miles, was reached. The only course left open to Bragg was to retreat, and to Dalton he fled, not only in disgust, but in grief, with his army broken into fragments, and leaving behind him 6,500 prisoners, 47 pieces of cannon, and 7,000 muskets.

General Sherman's account of his own persistent attacks at Missionary Ridge is of peculiar interest, because it forcibly illustrates one quality of Grant's generalship—that of "continually hammering the enemy," as he himself calls it—and which made him



so successful in winning battles. Once Sherman said to General James F. Rusling:

“At Chattanooga I was ordered to attack Bragg’s right, and I did so with all my force, but soon found the ground impassable, and was repulsed. I was ordered to attack again, and did with like result; and halted for orders. These came, ‘attack again,’ and I thought the old man daft and sent a staff officer to inquire if there wasn’t a mistake, but his reply was ‘No! Attack as ordered!’ And I did, vehemently; and simultaneously, he hurled Thomas and Sheridan against Bragg’s center, piercing and crushing it, and rolling his wings both ways, and the campaign was ended. Now what Grant did was this; by my attacks so often on my left, he made Bragg believe our main attack was to be there, and so he weakened his center to reinforce his right, and when Grant ‘divined’ he had done this sufficiently, he hurled Thomas forward as a battering ram and smashed him completely. It was a great victory—the neatest and cleanest battle I was ever in, and Grant deserves the credit of it all.”

Neither the spirit of boastfulness nor a tone of personal triumph was ever discernible in any dispatch or letter written by General Grant announcing a great victory. He seemed to write and speak as if his surprising successes came in the natural train of events. After the battle of Chattanooga the cheering news of the result was contained in the following modest dispatch to Washington: “Although the battle (on



Wednesday) lasted from early dawn till dark this evening, I believe I am not premature in announcing a complete victory over Bragg. Lookout Mountain top, all the rifle pits in Chattanooga Valley and on Missionary Ridge entire, have been captured and are now held by us."

The last few hours of the battle furnished a scene which, for grandeur, was never before beheld on this continent. "The whole army was swept onward by an irresistible impulse." The victory was more complete than the ablest and most thoughtful military men could hope for. And Halleck—always sparing in his words of commendation of General Grant—was so warmed up by the victory as to say that considering the strength of the enemy's position, which seemed to be impregnable, and the difficulty of storming his intrenchments, "the battle of Chattanooga must be regarded the most remarkable in history."

General Grant increased in strength as he grew in experience, and he so planned and fought at Chattanooga as to make the laurels of Shiloh and Vicksburg fade in the splendor of the achievement.



## XXV.

### PUBLIC HONORS COME TO GRANT AFTER THE BATTLES.



HE thundering sound of cannon and the cheers of the victorious army at Chattanooga had hardly died away when General Grant sent Sherman to Knoxville—eighty-four miles away—to relieve Burnside who was besieged by Longstreet with a force of 15,000 men. Sherman acted with his habitual promptness, and his cavalry reached Burnside on the 3rd of December, the very day on which the last ration was issued. Longstreet being driven from Tennessee, retreated into Virginia to join the forces of Lee.

When President Lincoln heard that Burnside—for whose safety he had much solicitude—had been saved from the power of the enemy, he sent General Grant the following dispatch on the 8th of December:

“Understanding that your lodgment at Knoxville and at Chattanooga is now sure, I wish to tender you, and all under



your command, my more than thanks—my profoundest gratitude—for the skill, courage, and perseverance with which you and they, over so great difficulties, have effected that important object. God bless you all.”

The country was full of joy over the victory of Chattanooga. Congress adopted a resolution of thanks and voted that a gold medal be struck and presented to General Grant in the name of the people of the United States of America. Several states also adopted resolutions of thanks; and the citizens of Jo Daviess county, Illinois, of which Galena was the General's home town, presented to him a diamond hilted sword, afterwards known as the “Chattanooga sword.” The scabbard is of gold, and bears the names of all the battles which Grant had fought up to that time.

During the latter part of January, 1864, the General obtained a leave of absence for the purpose of visiting his son Frederick, who lay dangerously ill at St. Louis. “Fred” was the eldest son, who, at thirteen accompanied his father on the Vicksburg campaign and displayed remarkable soldierly qualities at that time, particularly at the bloody battle of Champion's Hill. The boy rode a horse, and, like his father, was unterrified by the volley of bullets or the roar of cannon. While on this visit to his son, the General was requested by the War Department to keep his headquarters with him, and whether in the sickroom, or at the hotel, or in the banquet hall, he kept his mind on all matters pertaining to his army, and was able to hold communica-



tion with his commanders with as much readiness as if he were at his new headquarters at Nashville.

Frederick's condition was greatly improved during his father's brief visit; but as to what occurred before the General returned to Nashville the *Memoirs* are silent. No matter whether he was in the midst of a great campaign or at a function given in his honor, the General could not lay aside his extreme modesty. The name of "U. S. Grant, Nashville," on the Lindell Hotel register was sufficient to spread the news of his presence with almost the rapidity of wildfire throughout the city. The Lindell lobby was soon thronged with people eager to catch a glimpse of the little man who had won the battle of Chattanooga. The streets which he paced in vain, time and again, only five years before in search of employment, now resounded with cheers in his honor.

On Friday evening, January 29th, General Grant was honored by an enthusiastic populace with a sere-nade. When he appeared on the balcony of the hotel he was greeted with tremendous applause. Taking off his hat and bowing, a profound silence reigned. It was supposed that he would say something about the dramatic battle at Chattanooga, and the vast multitude was eager to catch a glimpse of the little man who had won "I thank you for this honor. I cannot make a speech. It is something I have never done and never intend to do, and I beg you excuse me." He then took a cigar from his pocket, and lighting it in the presence of the great throng, he smoked his Havana with as much



modesty as if it were only one of the common lot who had assembled to witness the beautiful pyrotechnic display. Cheer after cheer being given him, Judge Lord placed his hand on the General's shoulder and said: "Tell them you can fight for them but can't talk for them." But the General modestly answered: "I will have to get someone else to say that for me"; and with that remark he retired from the scene.

The county and city which, a few years before, refused to give him the office of engineer, now tendered him a banquet which was given on the same evening on which occurred the public demonstration at the Lindell Hotel. Most of the two hundred persons present had never seen General Grant, and it is small wonder that they gazed upon him with surprised curiosity. He had not the appearance of a great general, or of a distinguished person in any calling. His clothes were of the ordinary kind, and altogether he appeared like a very ordinary man. The applause showered upon him was extremely embarrassing to one of his retiring nature; and when he was called upon for a speech he blushing said: "Gentlemen, it is impossible for me to do more than thank you." In the course of the dinner he turned his glass, took a cigar, lit it in his peculiar way, and began to smoke, and the exceeding simplicity of the act brought laughter and cheers from the company.

The Common Council of the city prepared resolutions to be presented to the General in the preamble of



which is this sentence: "This body testify their great esteem, regard, and indebtedness, due his modest, unswerving energies, swayed neither by the mighty successes which have crowned his genius and efforts in behalf of the government, nor the machinations of politicians—evidences of the true patriot and soldier."

After General Grant's return to Nashville he kept himself busy in making tours of inspection, and giving directions to his generals pertaining to the movements of the various commands in the West. His ceaseless activity, and the ease with which he was able to grasp the situation of affairs in all its details, were a constant surprise to the army and the government. He seemed never to lack resources, and was always able to do the right thing at the right time, and in the issuing of orders and making reports. While these documents were sent out by the hundreds in every campaign, he wrote most of them himself, and General Sherman says he had as many as one hundred and fifty, every one of which was in General Grant's hand-writing.



## XXVI.

### GRANT COMMANDS THE ARMIES OF THE UNION.



HE phenomenal achievement of General Grant at Chattanooga was further proof of his consummate genius as a military leader. It is only by reviewing the unbroken series of great successes up to the time of his crowning victory, and considering their cumulative effect, that one can get any adequate conception of his greatness as a commander. He had met all the leading Confederate generals in the West and vanquished them. Buckner was made to surrender at Donelson. Albert Sidney Johnston lost his life at Shiloh in the vain attempt to drive General Grant away from the Tennessee river. Beauregard despaired on Sunday of being able to capture Pittsburg Landing, and on Monday the Confederate commander fled in disappointment to Corinth. Joseph E. Johnston was forced to retreat from Jackson



before the vigorous advance of General Grant's army. Pemberton was defeated at Champion's Hill and the Big Black, and finally made to surrender his army at Vicksburg. Bragg met with overwhelming disaster at Chattanooga, and this ill-fortune to the Confederate chief compelled Longstreet to withdraw his forces from Tennessee and take refuge in Virginia.

No Union successes like these had been won in the East. Five generals—McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade—had each been in command of the Army of the Potomac at different times during the three previous years, and although they had consumed an army of 139,000 men (15,172 killed, 74,635 wounded, and 49,944 missing) no permanent advantage had been gained. While the field at Gettysburg had been carried by Meade, it was a sore disappointment to the Administration and a great misfortune to the cause of the Union that Lee was allowed to retreat in good order across the Potomac, where he could still make it necessary to sacrifice many thousand lives before the Union forces could break his army in pieces. Contrasting what had been done in the West with what had not been done in the East, led the Administration to think of General Grant in connection with the Army of the Potomac and more particularly with all the armies of the Union. It did seem to Lincoln and Stanton, and finally to Halleck, that General Grant was the one and only hope of the nation.

Referring more particularly to General Grant's call



to the Potomac, Colonel Henderson, of the British army, says in the *Science of War*: "The Federal strategy in the last year of the war, with Grant in command and Sherman his lieutenant, stands out in marked relief to the disjointed, partial, and complicated operations of the previous years . . . . Grant seems to have been the first to recognize that, as von Moltke puts it, the time objective of a campaign is the defeat of the enemy's main army . . . . General Sheridan's summing up of the handling of the Army of the Potomac, before Grant took command, is to the point: 'The army was all right; the trouble was that the commanders never went out to lick anybody, but always thought first of keeping from getting licked.' Grant, like Moltke, was always ready to try conclusions."

On the 29th of February, 1864, Congress revived the grade of Lieutenant General, which had been held by Washington from 1798 to the time of his death in December, 1799. General Winfield Scott held the rank only by brevet, from 1855 to his death in 1866. No name was mentioned in the act of 1864, but it was understood by everybody that it meant the promotion of General Grant. Lincoln nominated him for Lieutenant General on the 1st of March, and the nomination was confirmed on the following day. On Thursday, March 3d, General Grant, then being in Nashville, received orders from the President to report to Washington.

At five o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, March 8th,





GENERAL GRANT.

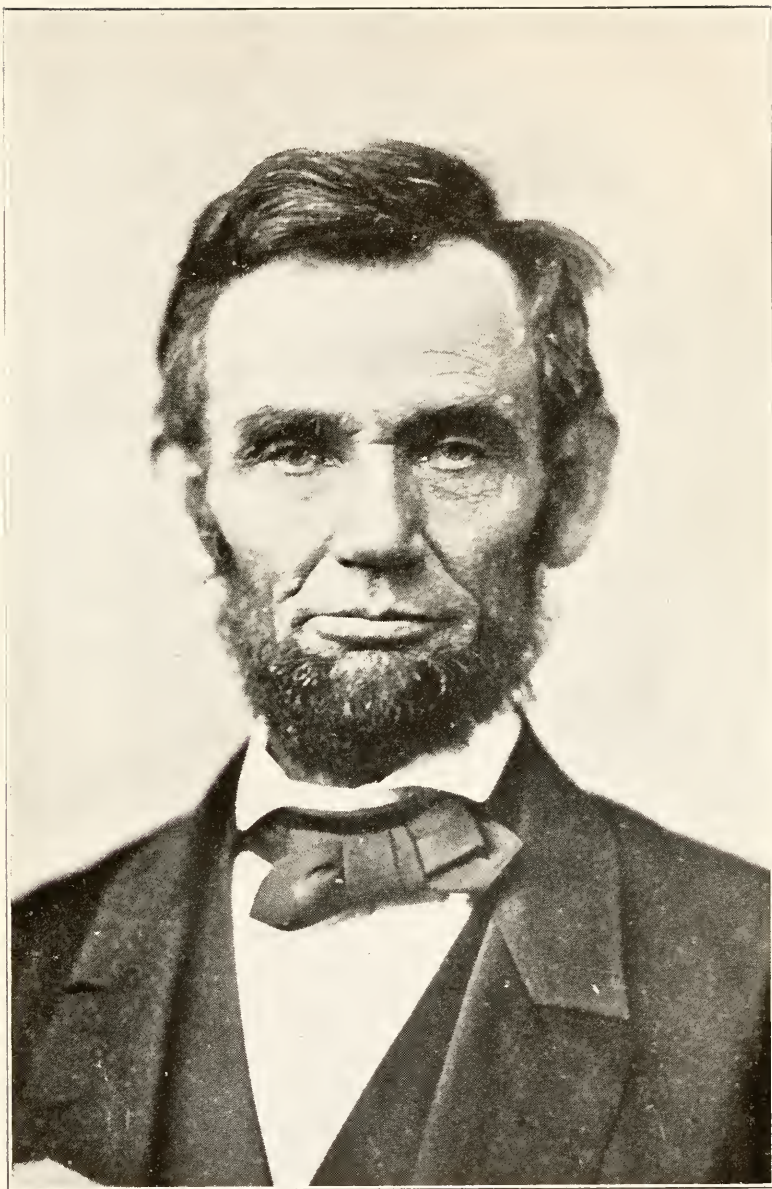
FROM A RARE PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT THE WAR DEPARTMENT  
A FEW HOURS AFTER HE RECEIVED HIS COMMISSION  
AS LIEUTENANT GENERAL.

[From a Defective Negative, Never Before Published,  
Loaned by Walter Kempster, M.D.]









ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT THE SAME TIME AND PLACE  
AS THAT OF GENERAL GRANT ON THE PRECEDING PAGE.







an officer who was modestly attired was seen leading a fourteen year old boy by the hand into Willard's hotel. Without speaking to any one, or paying any attention to the throng in the lobby, he registered as "U. S. Grant and son, Galena, Illinois." Then quietly and modestly he entered the dining room and took a seat at the table. He was not recognized by any one when he registered; but he had been at the table only a few minutes when a gentleman from New Orleans recognized him, and rising from his seat, cordially shook hands with the General. In a flash, as by electric communication, the news that General Grant was in the room spread through the hotel, and hundreds of guests, Senators, Representatives, Supreme Court Judges, officers of the army, sprang from their seats and cheered in a tremendous manner, and crowded around the blushing, confused object of this sudden ovation. When his meal was finished he left the room, only to encounter another throng of enthusiastic admirers who awaited him in the lower hall. The first time the General ever made a retreat from a superior force was when he made his way up the staircase into his own room.

In the evening of the same day General Grant visited the White House in company with Secretary Seward and several military friends, the special occasion being the President's levee. Some features of the event were more striking than had ever been witnessed in the East Room. The General entered the room unannounced, and was greatly embarrassed. Although



Lincoln and he had never met before, the President recognized him almost instantly, and a most loving greeting followed. The meeting of the two greatest men in the Nation was a scene difficult to describe. General Grant was literally lifted up for a while, and in obedience to an urgent demand of the throng for a larger view of the hero, Secretary Seward was assisted in mounting him upon a sofa. Never before was there such a coat-tearing jam in the White House, and the General seemed to wonder what it was all about.

John G. Nicolay, private secretary to the President, made personal memoranda of what transpired in the small drawing-room after the departure of the crowd. The President made an appointment with the General for the formal presentation the next day of his commission as Lieutenant General. "I shall make a very short speech to you," said Lincoln, "to which I desire you to reply for an object; and that you may be properly prepared to do so, I have written what I shall say, only four sentences in all, which I will read from manuscript as an example which you may follow and also read your reply, as you are perhaps not so much accustomed to public speaking as I am; and I therefore give you what I shall say so that you may consider it. There are two points that I would like to have you make in your answer: First, to say something which will prevent or obviate any jealousy of you from any of the other generals in the service; and second, something which shall put you on as good terms as possible with the Army of



the Potomac. If you see any objection to doing this, be under no restraint whatever in expressing that objection to the Secretary of War."

When the General escaped from the height of the sofa in the East Room, where he had been sandwiched between two heads of departments for exhibition, and got out of doors, he declared that he had quite enough of that kind of business; and, repairing to the hotel, he declined in quick succession a public dinner in New York, a reception on the floor of Congress, and a review of the Army of the Potomac.

One o'clock, Wednesday afternoon, March 9th, was the hour fixed for the presentation of the commission of Lieutenant-General. An event of that kind had not been witnessed since the days of Washington. There were present, besides Lincoln and Grant, all the members of the Cabinet, and Halleck, Representative Owen Lovejoy of Illinois, General Rawlins and Colonel Comstock of Grant's staff, Frederick, the fourteen-year-old son of the General, now Major-General of the United States Army, and Private Secretary Nicolay.

When the General had been presented to the Cabinet, the President approached him and said: "General Grant, as the Nation's appreciation of what you have done, and its reliance upon you for what remains to be done in the existing great struggle, you are now presented with this commission, constituting you Lieutenant-General in the Army of the United States. With this high honor devolves upon you also a corresponding



responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you. I scarcely need to add that with what I here speak for the Nation, goes my own hearty personal concurrence."

One of the bravest acts of General Grant's life was in preparing his reply to suit himself. Hurriedly, and almost in an illegible form, he had written his speech on a half sheet of note paper with a lead pencil. And when the moment came to respond to the President, his embarrassment was great. His voice was somewhat tremulous and he found his own writing difficult to read, but what he said could hardly have been improved: "Mr. President, I accept the commission with gratitude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought on so many fields for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving on me; and I know that if they are all met, it will be due to those armies, and above all, to the favor of that Providence which leads both nations and men."\*

There is something unspeakably magnificent in the courage and independence of the man who stood before the President of the United States to receive the highest military rank in the world, and to say "No" to his

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\* Grant once wrote to Mr. E. B. Washburne: "Nothing ever fell over me like a wet blanket so much as my promotion to the lieutenant-generalcy. As junior major-general in the regular army I thought my chances good for being placed in command of the Pacific Division when the war closed."



suggestion regarding the Army of the Potomac and its generals. Mr. Nicolay, in calling attention to the fact that Grant made no response whatever to the subject of the President's request of the night previous, says: "It is not known whether he did this after a consultation with Stanton, or whether, with his deeper distrust of Washington politicians, he thought it wise to begin by disregarding all their suggestions."

The General did not leave behind him one word which explains his conduct. We may surmise his determined purpose, but we can go no further. To Lincoln his reference to the army in the East and its commanders was of vital importance, but it will be shown further on that Grant wanted but little to do with Washington and its influences during his command of the army, and in totally ignoring the President's wish, he displayed the same exalted courage and sublime audacity which had made him so successful in his western campaigns.

On the following day, March 9th, Grant went to Brandy Station—70 miles from Washington—to the headquarters of General Meade, then commanding the Army of the Potomac, whom he had not seen since the Mexican War. Upon his return to Washington, Grant made preparations to leave immediately for the West, but at the close of a consultation with the President and the Secretary of War, he was informed that Mrs. Lincoln expected his presence the same evening at a military dinner to be given in his honor, at which twelve



distinguished officers, then in the city, were to be present. Frank B. Carpenter, who was then at the White House, working on his celebrated painting, "Lincoln and his Cabinet," says Grant turned to the President and said that it would be impossible for him to remain over as he must be in Tennessee at a given time. The President insisted that he could not be excused, and here we have another manifestation of Grant's independence and will-power. He said to Lincoln: "But the time is very precious just now, and really, Mr. President, I believe I have had enough of this 'show business.'"

So while the man of deeds—indifferent to blandishments and caring nothing for receptions—was speeding on his way to Nashville to meet Sherman and talk over the momentous business of trying to end the war, the twelve "distinguished" officers were banqueted without a guest of honor. But perhaps in the feasting and the merry-making of the night, they could not but ponder over the strange things which had come to pass that day: a general so devoted to his duties in the field as to have no time or desire to be received by Congress or banqueted by the wife of the President; a man who had been out of the position of a common store-clerk hardly three years, given command of all the Union forces on land and sea; a great load lifted from the long-burdened heart of Lincoln; the bells of time ringing in a better day for the cause of the Union.

When the enormous responsibility of directing



600,000 men in the armies of the Union, and 600 warships was laid upon Grant, the eye of the civilized world was fixed upon him. He was to engage in a desperate contest with the splendid army of northern Virginia, commanded by Robert E. Lee. Many were in doubt as to the result. But there were two men whose faith in final victory was as fixed as the foundation of the hills—Lincoln and Grant. Each believed in the other. Lincoln liked Grant from the first because he was always honest with the administration. Grant could no more be stampeded by the danger of meeting Lee in the East than he had been in meeting Johnston, Beauregard, Pemberton, or Bragg in the West; neither could he be compromised by flattery.



## XXVII.

### PREPARING TO FIGHT LEE.



RANT reached Nashville on the 14th of March, and met Sherman on the 17th. On the 12th of the month, at the special request of Grant, Sherman was placed in command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, a position held by the former at the time he was assigned to the command of all the armies; and McPherson, to whom Grant showed a marked affection, succeeded Sherman as commander of the Department of the Tennessee.

The relation between Grant and Sherman was peculiarly touching. The warm and generous friendship existing between them was without parallel in the history of the American army. In many points they were dissimilar. But in all essential things they were one. They were patriotic, unselfish, and in honor preferring one another; each had the courage and ability to fight,



and in all their operations they were without personal ambition or politics. But their love and friendship and confidence in each other can be better illustrated by reference to two charming letters which passed between them at the time of Grant's promotion to the command of the armies.

On the 4th of March, while at Nashville, preparing to go to Washington, Grant wrote a letter to Sherman, who was then near Memphis, in which he said:

"I start in the morning . . . but I shall say very distinctly on my arrival there that I shall accept no appointment which will require me to make that city my headquarters. . . . While I have been eminently successful in this war, in at least gaining the confidence of the public, no one feels more than I how much of this success is due to the energy, skill, and the harmonious putting forth of that energy and skill, of those whom it has been my good fortune to have occupying subordinate positions under me. . . . But what I want is to express my thanks to you and McPherson as the men to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success. How far your advice and suggestions have been of assistance you know. How far your execution of whatever has been given you to do entitles you to the reward I am now receiving you cannot know as well as I do. I feel all the gratitude this letter would express, giving it the most flattering construction. . . ."

It has been said that Grant could not write in this strain to anyone else in the world. Elsewhere in the history of war is not found so beautiful a letter as this written to a subordinate. He almost apologizes to Sherman for accepting a promotion and an honor which he cannot in full measure share. And Sherman, on the 10th of the month, wrote an answer which, in noble



generosity, almost rivals Grant's. A finer or juster characterization of Grant has never been written. It is the heart expression of the one commander above all others, whose confidence in, and whose affection for, Grant never changed from the time he compelled Donelson to surrender to his promotion to commander-in-chief:

"You do yourself injustice and us too much honor in assigning to us so large a share of the merits which have led to your high advancement. You are now Washington's legitimate successor, and occupy a position of almost dangerous elevation; but if you can continue as heretofore to be yourself, simple, honest, and unpretending, you will enjoy through life the respect and love of friends, and the homage of millions of human beings. . . . I repeat, you do General McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near; at Donelson also you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and General McPherson in too subordinate capacity to influence you. . . . I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype, Washington; as honest, unselfish, and kindhearted as a man should be; but the chief characteristic in your nature is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in his Saviour. This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga—no doubts, no reserve; and I tell you that it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew, wherever I was, that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come if alive. . . .

"Now as to the future. Do not stay in Washington. Halleck is better qualified than you to stand the buffets of intrigue and policy. Come out West; take to yourself the whole Mississippi Valley. Let us make it dead sure, and I tell you the Atlantic slope and the Pacific shores will follow its destiny, as



sure as the limbs of a tree live or die with the main trunk. . . . For God's sake and for your country's sake, come out of Washington. I foretold to Halleck before he left Corinth the inevitable result to him, and now I exhort you to come out West. . . ."

When Sherman met Grant at Nashville, the greeting he gave him was this: "I cannot congratulate you on your promotion; the responsibility is too great." But Grant answered not a word, and "kept on smoking." Matters pertaining to the movements of the great armies were discussed during the two or three days the two commanders were at Nashville, and as Grant was in haste to return to the Potomac, they rode together as far as Cincinnati, and in the spirit of tenderly affectioned brothers, they talked over campaign plans, and then parted, not to meet again until a few days before the saving of the Union was accomplished.

Grant arrived in Washington on the 23d of March, and without delay held a conference with the President and the Secretary of War. A story is told by Colonel William Conant Church of the *Army and Navy Journal*, which illustrates how unshaken was the President's confidence in Grant's ability to march the Army of the Potomac against the Army of Northern Virginia and capture the stronghold of the rebellion. The incident took place just before Grant established his headquarters in the field. When he called upon the Secretary of War, the latter said:

"Well, General, I suppose you have left us enough men to garrison the forts strongly."



"No, I can't do that," was the General's quiet reply.

"Why not? Why not?" repeated the nervous Secretary.

"Because I have already sent the men to the front, where they are needed more than in Washington."

"That won't do," said Stanton. "It's contrary to my plans. I will order the men back."

Grant maintained a quiet determination, and replied:

"I shall need the men there, and you cannot order them back."

"Why not? Why not?" cried the Secretary.

"I believe I rank the Secretary of War in this matter," remarked Grant.

"Very well, we will see the President," sharply responded the Secretary.

"That's right; he ranks us both."

Going to the President, Secretary Stanton, turning to Grant, said:

"General, state your case."

But the General calmly replied:

"I have no case to state. I am satisfied as it is."

When Stanton had given his view of the matter, Lincoln crossed his legs, leaned back in his chair, and like the wise philosopher that he was, said:

"Now, Mr. Secretary, you know we have been trying to manage this army for nearly three years, and you know we haven't done much with it. We sent over the



mountains and brought Mr. Grant, as Mrs. Grant calls him, to manage it for us, and now I guess we'd better let Mr. Grant have his own way."

After Grant had explained to the President some features of the proposed campaign in Virginia, the latter said to a friend in Baltimore: "When I listen to him explaining his plans and purposes in the coming campaign, I am appalled at their magnitude and astounded at the confidence he seems to feel in his ability to accomplish them."

The strange man from the West—a stranger to Washington and to nearly every public man and military leader in the East—was never more mysterious than when he planned the Virginia campaign. What his plans were he did not give in detail to the War Office. He did not even whisper all of them in the ear of the President. But the President did not mind this omission. He believed in Grant and desired that he should have his own way; and Grant's faith in his own purposes was so strongly rooted that just before the forward movement began he said: "I feel as certain of crushing Lee as I do of dying."

The battleground on which the fate of the Confederacy was to be decided embraced a strip of the State of Virginia extending about one hundred miles south from Washington, and varying from forty to sixty miles wide from east to west. The flower of the Confederate army, commanded by the South's greatest military genius, was planted in the middle of this territory. Up



to the close of 1863 more battles had been fought on this ground—nearly forty in all—than on any other strip of land of like extent in the South; and yet, so far as protecting the Confederate capital was concerned, Lee was master of the field. Lincoln knew, as well as the hero of many victories knew, that any further movement towards Richmond would “exact its frightful toll of blood.” But both were reconciled to the fact that the appalling sacrifice of life which must be made in the grapple with Lee was not too great a price to pay for the saving of the Union.

In his movement against Lee, Grant’s confidence and judgment were strengthened by his freedom from the morbid delusion, so often exhibited in McClellan, that the enemy greatly outnumbered him. Neither did he harbor for a moment the unpatriotic thought which at the time prevailed among many Northern people, that the Southern “stalwart” soldiers, as they were often called in the North, had better fighting qualities than the boys from the schools, workshops, and farms of the North.

On the 26th of March Grant repaired to his headquarters at Culpeper, seventy-five miles southwest of Washington. Lee’s headquarters were at Orange Court House, only fifteen miles further south.

The strength of the Army of the Potomac at the end of April, 1864, was 122,000, and according to common reports the Confederate forces under Lee numbered 62,000. But Grant reminds us that the manner of



estimating numbers in the two armies differed materially. "In the Confederate army often only bayonets are taken into account; never, I believe, do they estimate more than are handling the guns of the artillery and armed with muskets or carbines. Officers and details of enlisted men are not included. In the Northern armies the estimate is most liberal, taking in all connected with the army and drawing pay. . . . Estimating in the same manner as ours, Lee had not less than 80,000 men at the start; and his reinforcements were about equal to ours during the campaign. He was on the defensive, and in a country in which every stream, every road, every obstacle to the movement of troops and every natural defence were familiar to him and his army. . . . All circumstances considered, we did not have any advantage in numbers."

The Union army at this time, over which Grant had command, was not far from 600,000, and the amazing activity of his mind between the 23d of March, the date of his return to Washington from the West, and April 4th, is shown in his plan to utilize effectively this vast army of volunteers in making, so far as it was possible, a simultaneous movement against all the Confederate forces in the field.

Colonel Henderson, who is one of the most candid of foreign critics of Grant, says in *The Science of War*: "Until Grant took command in 1864, the Federal army never operated in combination. While one was moving forward the other was resting or preparing for a



fresh advance; and this disjointed state of things permitted their enemy to reinforce the threatened point at his leisure. Grant initiated a new policy. He pressed his opponents at every point simultaneously. Relying on his superior numbers he neutralized all the Southern advantages of interior lines. . . . It was easy enough for the Southern armies to get across the Confederacy in a very short time, and, by destroying the railroads, to make pursuit hopeless. This was prevented by Grant's energy in pushing the attack at every point."

The armies involved were to move with almost the precision with which one would move his men on a chess-board. Therefore Grant found it necessary to give Meade confidential instructions regarding his preparations for the coming campaign in Virginia. Meade was in command of the Army of the Potomac, and the keynote of Grant's plan of campaign was sounded in these instructions: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also." This was Grant's plan to take Richmond. It was new to the generals on the Potomac, but almost everything he had done during the previous three years was both new and strange to the commanding generals, East and West. He seems to have been the first clearly to comprehend the fact that the Confederacy stood on only two legs: Richmond, the seat of its power in the East, constituting the right; and Vicksburg, in the West, blockading the Mississippi with its frowning guns, being the



left. Having broken the latter, thus reopening the Mississippi, Grant now purposed to break the former by chasing Lee and provoking him to fight, or flanking him, and steadily approaching Richmond, "dragging Lee after him."

Grant tells us that he had not seen Meade from the close of the Mexican War until the 11th of March, 1864, when they met at Brandy Station. At that time Meade earnestly urged Grant to relieve him of the command of the Army of the Potomac, if he wanted Sherman or any other officer who had served with him in the West, to take his place. Grant refused to do this, but it gave the Commander-in-chief "a more favorable opinion of Meade than did his great victory at Gettysburg the July before."

But Grant says: "Meade's position afterwards proved embarrassing to me if not to him. . . . I tried to make his position as nearly as possible what it would have been if I had been in Washington or any other place away from his command. I therefore gave all orders for the movements of the Army of the Potomac to Meade to have them executed. To avoid the necessity of having to give orders direct, I established my headquarters near his, unless there were reasons for locating them elsewhere. This sometimes happened, and I had occasion to give orders direct to the troops affected."

But it was as gratifying as it was surprising that the two commanders, so dissimilar in many personal



traits, maintained such harmonious relationship in the great struggle and numberless vexations of the field. Physically there was a wide difference between them. One was small, modest in speech, slow in movement, lacking in military bearing, reserved in demeanor, with an impassive face, and almost listless at times. The other was tall, emphatic, the very picture of a soldier, quick in articulation and in action, with a "face as of antique parchment." To a casual observer it would seem as if the military rank of the two men should be reversed. But Meade was a brave soldier and a splendid patriot, and the complaints that he did not receive fair treatment while in command of the Army of the Potomac under Grant came from his unwise friends and never from him. But it must be admitted that Meade did not possess the unconquerable will and the genius to plan and successfully execute a great campaign like the final one against Lee. The peculiar qualities which made Grant so successful in the West, were lacking in Meade as well as in all his predecessors on the Potomac.

When Richard Henry Dana, Jr., was in Washington in April, 1864, he met Grant for the first time at the breakfast table at Willard's, and in his journal of April 21st he describes most vividly "the homeliness of the rather shabby and unimpressive figure" selected to lead the armies of the Union to victory. Mr. Dana says, as quoted in his life by Charles Francis Adams: "Grant gets over the ground queerly. He does not



march or walk, but pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose. But his face looks firm and hard and his eye is clear and resolute, and he is certainly natural and clear of all appearance of self-consciousness. How war, how all great crises bring us to the one-man power!"

Mr. Dana said to Grant: "I suppose you don't mean to breakfast here again till the war is over." Handling his English "as cavalierly as if it were the enemy," the General promptly answered: "Not here, I shan't." He made good his promise. He did not breakfast at Willard's again till the army of Lee was broken in pieces, and Peace was emblazoned upon "the dome of the Union sky."

With the beginning of May the army was ready to move toward Richmond; and on the 30th of April the President sent Grant a charming letter, part of which is as follows:

"Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. . . . If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know. And now with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you."

Grant was touched more deeply by this letter than by any communication he had received from any public official. He cared little for praise or fame, and the joyful public acclamations following any one of his



great victories apparently did not move him. But the words which came from the great heart of Lincoln made a deep impression upon him, and in the quiet hour of Sunday afternoon, May 1st, and while in a mood befitting the occasion, he wrote an answer, the like of which the President had never received from any previous commander:

"Your very kind letter of yesterday is just received. The confidence you express for the future and satisfaction for the past in my military administration is acknowledged with pride. . . . I have never had any cause of complaint . . . against the administration or the Secretary of War, for throwing any embarrassment in the way of my vigorously prosecuting what appears to be my duty. . . . I have been astonished at the readiness with which everything asked for has been yielded without even an explanation being asked. Should my success be less than I desire and expect, the least I can say is, the fault is not with you."

By the night of May 3d the Army of the Potomac was ready to move in the face of the enemy and toward Richmond. On that memorable night Grant assembled his officers at his headquarters at Culpeper and quietly and briefly unfolded to them a comprehensive plan of a campaign which showed remarkable penetrative power; and while this impressive midnight meeting was being held, the world was looking on, wondering what would be the result.



## XXVIII.

### THE DESPERATE FIGHT IN THE WILDERNESS.



LITTLE after midnight on May 4th, 1864, the Army of the Potomac moved to the south side of the Rapidan. The Confederates were not ignorant of this movement. They clearly divined its purpose. The Confederate authorities at Richmond now became satisfied for the first time that it was really Grant's purpose to take the city. Before this they believed the demonstrations in that direction were a mere feint to conceal his real intentions. They flattered themselves that "On to Richmond" had been tried so often without success that it would not be ventured on very soon again; and that Grant was endeavoring to accomplish by strategy some grand result not attainable by the valor and strength of the Union armies.

Never was the Army of the Potomac so peculiarly and emphatically the Grand Army as it was at the beginning and during the remainder of one of the most



memorable campaigns in the history of modern warfare. All former methods of trying to take Richmond were abandoned. The current phrase, "All quiet along the Potomac," was now obsolete. The army was in the field to fight and win. The magnificent army of 122,000 was splendidly equipped for any emergency. Grant was a good feeder of men. His supply train was made up of 4,000 wagons, which, if placed in single file, would reach from the Rapidan to Richmond.

The infantry consisted of four corps, the Second commanded by W. S. Hancock, the Fifth by G. K. Warren, the Sixth by John Sedgwick, and the Ninth—an independent organization—by Burnside. Sheridan, whose gallantry at Chattanooga had been observed by Grant, was called to the Potomac and given command of 14,000 cavalry. In addition to this, over 300 pieces of cannon accompanied the command. Grant hoped to be able to flank Lee and fight him on more favorable ground than that which lay between the Rapidan and Spottsylvania. But in this he was disappointed. The movement of the Army of the Potomac was discerned by Lee, and on the afternoon of Thursday, May 5th, the clash of the two armies began. The time and place were of Lee's own choosing. He had the enormous advantage of position. He seems to have been confident that he could trap Grant in the Wilderness. But Grant was determined to stand battle even against tremendous disadvantage; and thus "began the mutual slaughter of the Wilderness, on a scene the



strangest ever chosen by man or by destiny for a field of a great battle."

The Wilderness, which proved a formidable obstacle to Grant's advance, and into which he plunged his army when provoked by Lee, is described as a regular jungle, a table-land covered with dense undergrowth, scrub-oak, dwarf pines, and hazel thicket woven together by trailing vines and briars. It was nothing less than "a region of gloom and the shadow of death."

I cannot here describe the movements of all the corps or divisions engaged in the two battles in the Wilderness. By the limitation placed upon me I must confine myself as closely as possible to the deeds of Grant, which show how much his presence on the field and his direction of all the chief movements in battle inspired the valor of the army and influenced results.

On Thursday morning, May 5th, when the corps commanders took up the line of March in two columns five miles apart, but to concentrate when conditions demanded, Lee was massing his troops to break the Union line. This was the battle in the Wilderness. At this hour (early on Thursday) Grant had not reached the leading column, but Meade assumed the responsibility to say to Warren, whose corps was in advance, "We must fight. This is the battleground." And, "If the enemy attacks, go into battle with all the men you have." This was no sooner said than Warren's corps was struck by Ewell's column.

When Grant arrived at the scene of action he or-



dered Hancock to join Warren. Then Longstreet began to hurl his battalions against the Second Corps. But it was all in vain. It was a terrible beginning of the march to Richmond. From an early hour in the afternoon till night came on the firing was incessant. The woods and underbrush were so dense that officers had to dismount. It is said that at times portions of the two armies were hardly more than two hundred yards apart, but not a man on either side could be seen.

There was no room in the jungle for manoeuvring the army; no possibility of a bayonet charge; no help from artillery; none from cavalry; nothing but close, square, severe, face to face volleys of fatal musketry—roll surging upon roll—without the least cessation! The onslaught of the Confederates was pushed with strange obstinacy. Lee was fighting with desperation on the ground he had chosen for a victory. But it was not until darkness came that he realized that his efforts had failed, that his best chance of success had gone, and he quietly withdrew from the scene of carnage.

When the account of the first clash with Lee reached Washington, Lincoln is reported to have said: "Any other commander the Army of the Potomac has had would have at once withdrawn his army over the Rappahannock after that first day's reception." But instead of getting out of the Wilderness, Grant ordered an attack all along the line at five o'clock on Friday morning. And it was such generalship and fighting as this that prompted Quartermaster General Ingalls, who was with



the army, to say: "The world never heard of war before."

The second day's struggle in the Wilderness began at Grant's appointed time. The attack was carried all along the line, some five miles in length, the army facing southward. It was the battle of Thursday continued—the same storm of bullets, the same continuous, desperate, determined struggle against hampering conditions, the same murderous conflict for the right of way to Richmond, the same willingness of the Union soldiers to take all the chances of life or death in the tremendous onslaught of a valiant foe.

The conflict began on the left of the line in front of Hancock, who succeeded in forcing the enemy a mile and a half to the rear, and within a hundred and fifty yards of Lee's headquarters. The reward for this vigorous assault was the capture of the enemy's rifle-pits, flags, and many prisoners. But the victory was soon followed by a repulse. The Confederates were reinforced by Longstreet, who began a charge on the Second corps with a force irresistible. Solid masses of infantry were hurled upon Hancock time after time, but at last he took a stand from which he could not be driven. Reinforcements had been sent him, and later in the day Grant ordered Hancock to renew the assault, and at once the fortunes of the day were changed.

A number of sharp attacks were made at various points, and invariably repulsed, whether made by the Union troops or the enemy. These occasional repulses



by the Confederates did not bring on forebodings of defeat in the minds of those who knew the tenacity of purpose and fertility of resources which characterized Grant. During the moments when he was watching the battle in silence, he was in full command of all his powers, with the outward calm and composure of perfect self-control.

Friday was a trying day to Lee. Things had not gone according to his reckoning. To fail to stampede Grant, or, at least, not to be able to hold his own lines on Saturday, was a grievous disappointment. The Confederate commander's calculation was that Grant ought to have considered himself beaten, and retired after the two days' fight and ended the campaign, as some of his predecessors had done, almost as soon as it was begun. But that was not Grant's way of fighting, as his western campaigns might have taught his Confederate opponent.

And so the battle raged with the never-varying flashing of musketry and the constant distress caused by natural impediments. Not more than a score of the 300 cannon with the army could be employed; and whatever of cavalry was brought in action was dismounted. During Friday Hancock was ordered to repel one of the fiercest assaults encountered in the Wilderness. It was brief, but bloody, terrific in power and almost superhuman momentum.

Grant's hope and determination were indestructible. On Friday afternoon, when the troops were hotly en-



gaged, the air filled with gloom, the smoke almost stifling, and the heat oppressive, General Rawlins, chief-of-staff, seemed to manifest some misgivings as to the result of the day's work. But the Commander-in-chief, with a look that did not bear any indication of a disturbed feeling, quietly said: "The fighting is difficult and hard, and the losses are heavy, but Lee will not gain an inch of ground by bringing on this battle."

It is conclusive from the records of Thursday and Friday that "Lee attempted the same tactics at the Wilderness on Grant that he had practised on Hooker at Chancellorsville, where he had defeated an army larger by 20,000 men than that with which Grant had passed the river. He failed to drive Grant back across the Rapidan, as he had driven Hooker the year before from nearly those same woods, and Burnside from Fredericksburg in December, 1862. The effect of this failure was to change Lee from the bold aggressor to a careful, even timid defender of fortified lines."

The dawn of Saturday showed that Lee had fallen back behind his intrenchments. The hard hammering he received from Grant during the previous two days gave him much concern, and no attempt was made to plunge his much weakened army into another battle. And here ended the historic battle of the Wilderness, in which was witnessed, Grant says, "more desperate fighting than had ever been known on this continent." From beginning to end it was a bloody bush-fight. So determined was the fight that in the belt between the



opposing forces were places which were fought over four or five times during the battle.

The mysterious man in the Wilderness—"the small man on the black horse"—was an interesting study. The keen-eyed, ever alert, and nonpartisan war correspondents who were on the field to witness the operations of the army and record events are the most competent persons to portray Grant's characteristics in his Virginia campaign. On Saturday, May 7th, Charles A. Page, the brilliant and trustworthy correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, rode along the lines, looking for something romantic in the appearance of the man who was the leader of the Union armies. "The shrewd, profound, prescient soul and hero of Vicksburg gleamed only at rare intervals. No intimation of the workings of the inner man is portrayed. The bronzed face was immobile—impenetrable as iron."

Once it was observed that Grant had his staff with an escort dash through the woods of the Wilderness upon by-roads to avoid the troops and wagon-trains, his escort trailing after him. They galloped through the darkness, occasionally overtaking a body of troops who, as they passed, raised such shouts and cheers as to reduce any similar demonstration which the army had manifested toward any other commander into utter insignificance. Grant seldom smiled or bowed, because he had serious business on hand, but for all that, the Army of the Potomac had more confidence in him than in any previous commander.



William F. G. Shanks sent from the Wilderness this letter to the New York *Herald*:

"I had seen Grant at Vicksburg and in Tennessee, and his appearance was familiar, but as I strolled through the group of officers reclining on the ground under the trees at headquarters, I looked for him some time in vain, such was his insignificant, unpretending aspect and conduct while the battle was raging in all its fury. A stranger to the insignia of military rank would have little dreamed that the plain, quiet man who sat with his back against a tree, apparently heedless and unmoved, was the one upon whom the fortunes of the day, if not of the age and country, were hinging.

"The consultation with Meade, or the direct suggestion or command, all took place with that same imperturbability of countenance for which he has always been remarkable. No movement of the enemy seemed to puzzle him. . . . And while all this transpired he stood calmly in the group, at times smoking his favorite cigar—a more frequent puffing only indicating the inward working of the mind. If something transpired which he deemed needed his personal attention, away he darted on horse-back to the scene, the one or two of his aides and an orderly exerting their utmost to keep up with him. Arriving on the spot, he calmly considered the matter, with ready judgment communicated the necessary orders, and then galloped away to another part of the field."

Lee said to his officers on Thursday morning, the



5th: "I will give Grant three days to get out of the Wilderness, and back across the Rapidan." He supposed that history, as to the movements of the army of the Potomac, would repeat itself. But with all the difficulties and horrors of the first battle, Grant seemed as if he were not a man, but a tireless, relentless Force set for the devouring of the Confederate hosts. He did not get out of the Wilderness in three days, but firmly set his face towards Richmond, moved on and "dragged Lee after him."

The connection of Sheridan and his cavalry with the battle of the Wilderness furnishes an incident which deserves notice because of its importance as a piece of war history, although not a matter of record. It has already been stated that the cavalry performed but little service in the famous "brush-wood" battle. No general in the army had a greater thirst for a square open fight with the enemy than Phil. Sheridan. He had a pardonable self-confidence and immense courage, and could not get away from the conviction that he could whip any cavalry force the enemy might hurl against him, and, like Grant, he was peculiarly fortunate in never having over-measured his own strength.

General Edward W. Whitaker, a member of Sheridan's staff, has contributed to *The Independent* an account of how the dashing cavalry leader came to fight the great battle of Yellow Tavern. I can give only the substance of what General Whitaker says. During the close of the Wilderness battle Sheridan gave Whitaker



oral directions to find Grant, who was somewhere on the battle line, and say to him that he was tired of trying to fight in the woods, and wanted authority to take his entire cavalry force into Lee's rear. Grant and Meade were found in the pines where shot and shell were flying through the tree-tops, shattering everything in their course. Whitaker delivered the message to the Commander-in-chief, and upon receiving it he turned to Meade with remarkable calmness and said: "General, what do you think of it? Sheridan wants to take his entire cavalry into Lee's rear." Meade replied, with a shrug of the shoulders, that he did not like the idea, and added: "What about our trains? Will the cavalry officers be responsible for our trains?" Grant replied: "General, I guess Stuart will have enough to do with Sheridan in Lee's rear, and we can take care of the trains."

Grant's prompt decision had a far-reaching effect. In four days the decisive battle of Yellow Tavern was fought within six miles of Richmond, the ablest cavalry general of the Confederacy was killed, and his force routed.

At no time during the war were the apparent incongruities and contradictory qualities of Grant's physical and mental characteristics more marked than during this period of the Virginia campaign. Visitors and war correspondents who first saw him in the Wilderness were filled with amazement. It has been said that "his physiognomy was always at fault." The light of his



countenance never shone before men no matter how great were his achievements on the field. Small in stature and somewhat stooped in form, but endowed with wonderful endurance and aggressiveness; slow in movement, but marvellous in his spring to action before the enemy; homely, and heedless as to dress and to certain manners becoming his rank as a commander-in-chief, but a gentleman in every act and word; modest as a maiden and timid in many ways, he was the boldest and most intrepid fighter and conqueror of his time. Gentle, sympathetic, and humane to a rare degree, he was smiting Lee as he had smitten Beauregard, Longstreet, and Bragg with terrific tenacity and force, "with his hammer of blood and flesh when he believed it was the only way to success."



## XXIX.

### THE RACE TO SPOTTSYLVANIA—THE BATTLE.



ON Saturday, when Grant observed that Lee had abandoned his intrenchments, he decided to move to Spottsylvania. Lee began the same moment and nearly at the same time. The seedy little old town, forsaken long ago, was an important strategic point, from which the roads leading southward, both to the right and left, diverged; and here Lee determined to make another trial of his strength.

In the race on Saturday night, May 7th, between the two armies on parallel roads, for the occupation of Spottsylvania, the enemy won. But this must not be interpreted as conveying any censure of the Army of the Potomac. It was necessary that Grant should take heavy supply trains with him which somewhat retarded his progress. But it was not this simple accident of war which caused the loss of Spottsylvania to Grant. When his wagon trains were set in motion on Saturday



afternoon, Lee discovered the movement, and not being certain whether Grant was moving to the left or falling back to Fredericksburg, he ordered Longstreet's corps, then under the command of R. H. Anderson, to march to Spottsylvania on Sunday morning. But Anderson transcended his orders, with a success due partly to accident and partly to his excess of zeal. Finding the woods in his route on fire, and no suitable place to bivouac, he pushed to Spottsylvania during the night; and thus it came about that Warren's corps (which formed the head of Grant's column), arriving in the neighborhood the next morning after a laborious march, found themselves confronted by Longstreet's veterans in position. This singular incident caused both Grant and Lee to be grievously disappointed. Grant had hoped to pass beyond Spottsylvania in his night march; and Lee, supposing that Grant did not intend to go to Spottsylvania, telegraphed exultingly to Richmond: "The enemy has abandoned his position and is moving towards Fredericksburg. . . . Our advance is now at Spottsylvania Court House."

A shower of rain in the night of June 17th did much to change the fortunes of Napoleon at Waterloo; and burning woods in the night of May 7th was one of the strange chances of war which decide the fate of battles. Could Anderson have bivouacked with safety on Saturday night, in all probability the desperate battle at Spottsylvania, with its awful slaughter to the Union forces, would not have been fought.



On Sunday Grant found the enemy quite strongly entrenched at Spottsylvania, his lines almost encircling the town. During Sunday and Monday—the 8th and 9th—the Union army was placed in battle-line which stretched nearly six miles in the form of a crescent. From the moment Grant arrived near Spottsylvania, he was impressed with the solemn fact that conditions foreboded the coming of a great storm of battle. With the manoeuvring on Sunday and Monday was much sharp fighting which was indecisive, except that it demonstrated that Lee, with all his advantage of position, could not make Grant take one step backward. The battle ground was covered with forest and tangled underbrush, which meant that the conflict in the Wilderness was to be repeated at Spottsylvania; and behind all these obstructions were concealed the enemy's batteries. It was on Monday that General Sedgwick, the brave commander of the Sixth corps, fell a victim to the deadly aim of Confederate sharpshooters. While superintending the placing of a battery, he was laughing at his men for wincing at the whistling of the shots which came dangerously near their heads, when a bullet pierced his face, and while smiling, he died. The command of his corps thereafter fell upon General H. G. Wright.

Tuesday morning, May 10th, was intensely hot. The work of the day was a prelude to the most desperate battle fought by the army since Grant left Culpeper. Up to this time the batteries had been almost silent;



but on this morning they began a wild and general roar. Grant had ordered an attack by the infantry at one o'clock in the afternoon, and Lee was prepared for the assault. As details do not belong here, a general description only of the conflict can be given.

In writing of the heroism and patient endurance of the Grand Army of the Potomac in its operations on Tuesday, one cannot particularize in regiments or brigades, so vast were the forces engaged. Nearly all contributed to the marvellous scene of strife—"the constant rattle and roll of musketry; the roar of cannon; the deep reverberations; the cheers of the brave men; the explosion of shells and the terrific whizzing of the fragments." The main attack by the enemy was on Hancock's corps. He faced an awful storm of shot and shell. It was volley after volley, surge after surge, roll after roll, and yet how the Second corps stood like a wall of adamant! A trustworthy correspondent who saw as much of the battle as was possible for any one man to see, says the attack of Longstreet upon the Second corps at Gettysburg had more desperation in it than that at Spottsylvania, but the former lasted only fifteen minutes while the duration of the latter was through hours of hard, persistent, sanguinary conflict; and here, as at Gettysburg, Longstreet's attack failed. Warren's Fifth corps and Wright's Sixth were also true and effective in facing the deadly storm of iron and lead; but having borne the brunt of the desperate struggle, and having sacrificed more lives to the cause of suc-



cess than all other portions of the army combined, the valor of the Second corps should be ever memorable in the history of the war for the Union.

General J. C. Rice, of Warren's corps, was mortally wounded in one of the charges on Tuesday afternoon, and just before he expired he requested to be turned over on his side. "Which way?" asked an attendant. "Turn my face toward the enemy"; and with these words on his lips, he died, as many hundreds of brave men fell that day with their faces toward the enemy.

During the forenoon of Tuesday Grant sent this brief message to Halleck: "The enemy holds our front in very strong force, and evinces a strong disposition to interpose between us and Richmond to the last. I will take no backward step. Send to Belle Plain all the infantry you can rake and scrape." The hands of time never turn backwards, neither did the Army of the Potomac under the lead of Grant to Richmond. Had there been any faltering in the General at this juncture, any tardiness in his decision, any shrinking from the sacrifice of legions of brave men in his purpose to hold his ground, all had been lost.

When the carnage of Tuesday closed at nightfall—the fire and rolling clouds of smoke dividing the two armies and giving the scene an awful sublimity—it seemed that not much had been gained on either side. It was a battle of various phases and diverse fortunes. In some instances, there were perhaps some misunderstandings and misadventures among the officers; but for



all that it was a great battle, and Grant was still hopeful, and at an early hour on Wednesday morning the 11th, he sent the following message to Secretary Stanton:

"Our losses have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. I think the loss of the enemy must be greater. We have taken over five thousand prisoners by battle, while he has taken from us but few, excepting stragglers."

To this dispatch belongs a paragraph which contains another of Grant's burning sentences like the eloquent epigram uttered at Donelson: "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

Grant was fighting with a quiet determination which left no doubt of his ultimate success. There was no spirit of boastfulness manifest in this famous dispatch. What he said was simply a reaffirmation of his purpose to make Richmond fall by crushing Lee's army. His audacity was sublime and a good example of this is found in his dispatch to the War Department on Tuesday the 10th of May: "Please have supplies of forage and provisions sent at once, and fifty rounds of ammunition for one hundred thousand men."

There was no fighting on Wednesday. It was a day of preparation for one of the most furious battles of the war. Although the army had fought almost continuously since it crossed the Rapidan eight days before, it was ready to contend again with the enemy on Thursday for the possession of Spottsylvania.

On Wednesday afternoon Grant ordered Hancock to move his corps to the front of the right center of



Lee's intrenchments where was located the famous salient—a part of the works which projected outward—a position difficult to assault, and because of this difficulty the business of capturing it was assigned to the gallant commander of the Second corps. In darkness and through storm on Wednesday night Hancock quietly moved his men to a position not more than twelve hundred yards from the insolent salient whose face line was over two miles in length.

Grant's order, issued through Meade, was that Hancock should make the assault at four o'clock Thursday morning. He was to be supported by Burnside of the Ninth corps, and Warren and Wright of the Fifth and Sixth corps were to hold themselves in readiness to assist if emergency required it. The ground over which Hancock had to pass to reach the enemy was ascending and heavily wooded to within two or three hundred yards of the breastworks. The storming column rushed over the intrenchment with loud cheers. "A desperate hand-to-hand conflict took place. The men of the two sides were too close together to fire, but used their guns as clubs"; and so terrific was the death-grapple that at different times of the day the Confederate colors were planted on the one side of the works and the Stars and Stripes on the other. The angle of the works at which Hancock entered, and for which the savage fight of the day was made, was a perfect Golgotha. In this angle of death the dead and wounded Confederates lay literally in piles—men in the agonies of death groaning



beneath the dead bodies of their comrades. On one of the few acres in the rear of their position lay not less than one thousand Confederate corpses.

Before it was breakfast-time on Thursday, the 12th, Hancock had captured two Confederate generals, 4,000 prisoners, many colors, several thousand stand of arms, and between 30 and 40 cannon; but the climax of astonishment was reached when, the hand-to-hand fight over, Hancock "turned the guns of the enemy against him."

Nothing during the war had equalled the savage desperation of this struggle, which continued for more than fourteen hours; and the history of the day after six o'clock in the morning may be summed up in a few words. Lee's whole army flung itself in five desperate efforts to recapture the works he had lost, but every assault met a bloody repulse.

General Francis A. Walker, Assistant Adjutant General of the Second Corps, gives this description of Thursday's battle:

"Never before, since the discovery of gunpowder, had such a mass of lead been hurled into a space so narrow (the apex of the salient) as that which now embraced the scene of combat. Large standing trees were literally cut off and brought to the ground by infantry fire alone. . . . If any comparison can be made between the sections involved in that desperate contest, the fiercest and deadliest fighting took place at the West angle ever afterward known as 'The Bloody



Angle.' Here Wright's corps had taken post on coming up at six o'clock. So furious were the enemy's charges at this point that Wright, with two fresh divisions, was fain soon to call for reinforcements."

"All day," says Walker, "the bloody work went on and still the men of the North and of the South, now wrought to an inexpressible rage, were not gorged with slaughter. The trenches they had were then at once to be cleared of the dead to give the living a place to stand. All day long and even into the night, the battle lasted, for it was not till 12 o'clock, nearly 20 hours after the command 'Forward' had been given that the firing died down."\*

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\* It is worth while to take note of the gallantry and sacrifice of some of the troops engaged in the battle on Thursday, May 12th. The Fifteenth New Jersey, in the Sixth corps, crossed the Rapidan, May 4th, with 444 effective men. It lost but few in the Wilderness, but Spottsylvania consumed twenty-six per cent. of those engaged. When Thursday brought an end to the slaughter, the Fifteenth had only five officers and one hundred and thirty-six men available for duty. One hundred and sixteen members of the 444 lost their lives in three days, and eighty died at the Bloody Angle on Thursday. In proportion to the number of men engaged, this was next to the heaviest loss sustained by any regiment during the Civil War. The only exception was the First Minnesota infantry at Gettysburg. On Thursday afternoon, July 2nd, while "patching up" a second line of battle, Hancock said to Colonel Colville of the First, "Do you see those colors? Take them." The colors were taken by the regiment in a few minutes, but of the 262 men engaged in the charge, 74 died in the shower of bullets, the mortality being 28 per cent, the highest on record. The greatest loss of life in any one brigade during the war was in the Vermont brigade of Getty's division of the Sixth corps, composed wholly of Vermont troops. Within a week, in the Wilderness and at Spottsylvania, it lost 266 killed and 1,299 wounded. While the First division of Hancock's famous Second corps lost more in killed and wounded than any other division in the Union army—the loss was 14,011—it seems to have been ordained that General Getty's Second division of the Sixth corps should lose more men in



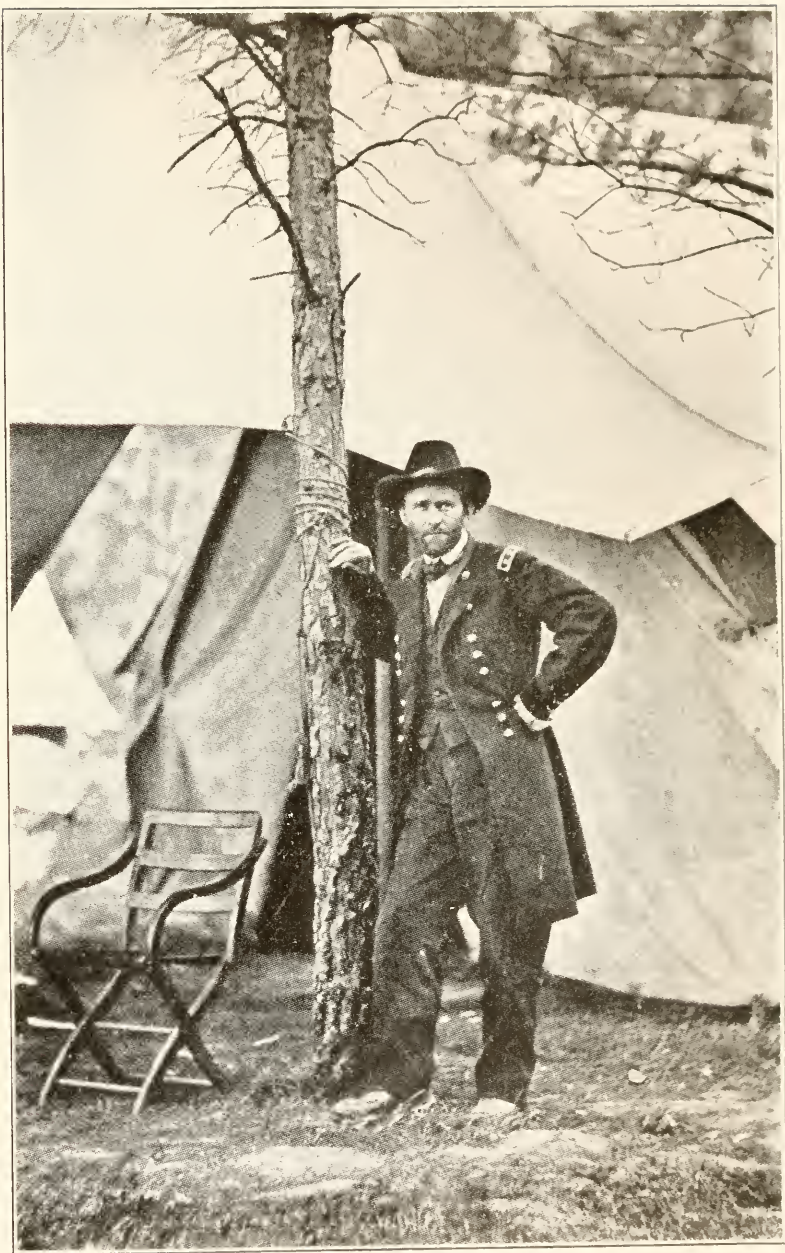
Thursday at Spottsylvania will be ever memorable in history as one of Grant's many remarkable achievements. The strain upon him was not less severe than on Sunday at Shiloh when, with marvellous physical and mental endurance, he completely thwarted the purposes of Johnston and Beauregard in bringing on that battle. He personally assumed full responsibility in adopting plans to reach the quaking capital of the Confederacy, leaving to Meade only the execution of the minor details. He wrote his own orders for battle, and many times his orders in battle. In a great emergency he wanted no intermediary. He did his own thinking, for no one else could think for him. He was sure that he stood on solid ground when he obeyed the dictates of his own judgment. He anchored his soul to one fact, that his strength lay in his faith and purpose, and therefore, on Thursday, he rode continuously from wing to wing of the blazing line that he might know from personal observation if all were well with the army. It was a strange sight to see the "mysterious little man early in the morning, standing beside a fire that was almost quenched by the rain, within sound of the musketry, receiving reports and directing the battle, but unable to perceive any of its movement, because shut out by trees."

Once a friend said to Grant, "I have often wondered whether you ever slept during the terrible strain in the wilderness and Spottsylvania." To which the General

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one battle in killed and wounded than any other division in the war—its casualties in the Wilderness on the 5th and 6th of May being 480 killed and 2,318 wounded—a total of 2,798.





GENERAL GRANT IN THE WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN.  
[From *McClure's Magazine*.]







answered: "When I had made my plans for the next day I slept very peacefully, always."

Grant was an inspiring force to the Army of the Potomac, which reflected the spirit of the Commander-in-chief. A representative of the *New York Evening Post* was on the battle field at Spottsylvania, and in a dispatch to the paper he said: "The confidence of the army in Grant exceeds anything ever before witnessed in this field. Every soldier religiously and solemnly believes that the Lieutenant General means to smash the rebellion, and that he will do it; and they tell with gusto of the novel methods he adopts to bring every man squarely up to the spirit of his own high purpose."

On the night preceding Thursday's awful battle, Grant went out to the line of skirmishers, and passing slowly along, encouraged the men with generous praise. He said to them in a voice filled with kindness: "Boys, you have never had a fair chance at these Johnny rebs, and I mean that you shall have it. You can whip them, I am sure you can, and we will try it in the morning." The men cheered, and the story flying from regiment to regiment, sent every soldier into the battle with the faith in their leader, and a confidence in themselves which made them perfectly irresistible.

The same devouring, unwearied energy Grant displayed in pressing the enemy at Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the Wilderness, was shown at Spottsylvania, where he had gained an advantage. Speaking of the results at this time Horace Greeley said: "Not a mo-



ment's rest—a battle in the morning, a victory, the enemy retreating, a pursuit—events succeeding each other by a law as irresistible as gravitation—a law which the little man of iron will impose on the day.” The crashing of masses against masses, which had gone on for days, did slowly, but surely—surely as the inexorable fate which Lee's proud army found in the unconquerable will of the silent man—tell against the Confederate foe. Inch by inch, and acre by acre, the ground upon which they stood was wrenched from their desperate hold. There was nothing more absolutely evident after Thursday than that Grant would some day compel the surrender of Lee's army.

When Leslie Stephens, the noted English author and critic, visited this country shortly after the general election in 1868, he met several distinguished Americans, and in giving a characterization of some of them, he said of Grant: “If I were to knock my head against Grant's it would be like rapping it against hard Scotch granite.” This well illustrates the kind of rapping Lee got from the time he met Grant in the Wilderness, and this is why the former was compelled to retire to a fresh position in the rear of that previously occupied and strongly intrenched at Spottsylvania. The energy and constancy with which Grant pursued Lee is quaintly told in the language of a Confederate officer captured in Hancock's assault on Thursday: “Has your General Grant got no heart at all? He fights all the while as



though there was nothing else in the world for him to do.”

The summing up of the whole situation to the close of Spottsylvania can be done in five words—Lee falling back, Grant advancing.



## XXX.

### THE DEADLY ASSAULT AT COLD HARBOR.



HEN Grant had fought four hard battles—two in the Wilderness and two at Spottsylvania—he seemed to despair of having an opportunity to meet Lee in an open field where the advantage of position and other conditions would be nearly equal. He therefore determined to leave Lee at Spottsylvania, and make a flank movement, and thereby press his way towards Richmond.

The rain which began during the battle of Thursday, the 12th, continued till Tuesday, the 17th; and the mud being hub-deep, it was almost impossible to move artillery or supply trains. In the meantime, Grant was expecting reinforcements from Washington, the army having had no accessions since it moved from Culpeper, while its depletion to May 21st, in killed, wounded, and missing, was 27,500.

It was at this period in the campaign that the reports



from other portions of the great army under his command were a surprise and disappointment to Grant. Sigel had been defeated at New Market, near Petersburg. Butler had been driven from Drury's Bluff, six miles south from Richmond. And worst of all was the miserable failure of Banks' Red River expedition, a movement which should never have been made. While all this was quite discouraging, especially to the Administration, Grant's philosophy taught him that it was no time to repine, and he nerved himself to the business of directing a movement of the Potomac army by the left flank towards Richmond. An advance was ordered at midnight, May 20th, the objective point being the crossing of the North Anna river, fifteen miles southward. It was always Grant's purpose to give Lee an opportunity to fight a square battle outside of intrenchments, but Lee, having had two weeks' experience with his antagonist, preferred not to meet him in an open conflict. When Grant began his march on the night of the 20th, he left Wright and Burnside, of the Sixth and Ninth corps, "to keep up the appearance of an intended assault, and to hold Lee, if possible, in Spottsylvania while Hancock and Warren should get start enough to interpose between him and Richmond." "Lee had now a superb opportunity," says Grant, "to take the initiative either by attacking Wright and Burnside alone, or by following the Telegraph road and striking Hancock's and Warren's corps, or even Hancock's alone, before reinforcements could come up; but he did neither.



. . . He seemed really to be misled by my designs.  
. . . He never again had such an opportunity of dealing a heavy blow."

Lee, finally discovering that Grant was moving in the direction of North Anna, immediately left his intrenchments, and having the inside, and shorter lines, was able to place his entire army south of the North Anna before Grant could reach the river, and here he intrenched. When Grant arrived at the river he captured the outer works on the 24th of May, but on the 25th the attempt of the Second corps to take the main works, which were almost impregnable, failed; and rather than slaughter his men when the chances of success were against him, Grant determined on another left flank movement, and as before—towards Richmond. If the advantage of fighting or not fighting were evenly balanced between the two armies, Grant was sure to fight, but in this instance, the advantage being altogether in favor of the enemy, he decided to outwit him.

Before springing another surprise on Lee, Grant sent a dispatch to Halleck in which he said that there could not be a battle with the enemy outside his intrenchments. He then adds: "I may be mistaken, but I feel that our success over Lee's army is already assured. The promptness and rapidity with which you have forwarded reinforcements have contributed largely to the feeling of confidence in our men, and to break down that of the enemy." "Nothing," say Nicolay and Hay, in their life of Lincoln, "like this had ever before been



received from a commander of the Army of the Potomac. A man was now in charge of affairs who respected the Government behind him more than the enemy in front."

On Tuesday night, May 26th, Grant recrossed the North Anna, and in this movement he showed himself master of one of the most difficult branches of military science—that of moving great bodies of troops with rapidity and precision. By Saturday night the Army of the Potomac was within twelve miles of Richmond. It had marched over thirty miles in less than three days, moved its supply trains of 4,000 wagons, and crossed two rivers in the face of the enemy. All the while Grant was unaware of the enemy's retreat from the North Anna; and Lee did not learn of the flank movement until the 27th. Though greatly embarrassed by the necessity of providing against surprise, Grant moved his vast forces the thirty miles—which under the circumstances, was, up to that time, one of the most remarkable movements ever made by the Army of the Potomac. It was a hazardous piece of strategy, but not too hazardous for Grant's unbridled genius and determined courage.

This was another of Grant's incomprehensible movements which bothered Lee, and being made without his knowledge or molestation, it called from Lincoln the quaint remark that "Grant had again climbed up garret and pulled the ladder after him."

Grant's objective point was Cold Harbor, the key to



Richmond on the north line of the approach. It was the point of convergence of all the roads radiating either to Richmond or to the White House, his then base of supplies. The importance of Cold Harbor was fully appreciated by the enemy, and several days before Grant began to move in that direction, one of the Richmond papers said in a witty prophecy in reference to his favorite tactics: "Grant has grown so enamored of his left flank that he will probably work his way down towards the James river, and we shall have another decisive battle of Cold Harbor." By this the paper meant what the Federals called the battle of Gaines' Mills—that having been the position held by Fitz-John Porter's corps in the battle of June 27th, 1862, while Cold Harbor was held by Stonewall Jackson.

The juncture of the North Anna and South Anna rivers, a few miles below the point where Grant assaulted Lee's intrenchments on the 24th and 25th of May, forms the Pamunkey, and in moving southward he crossed the river near Hanover Town. When he placed his army on the south side of the Pamunkey, Grant had accomplished his third successful flank movement, and was within twelve miles of the Confederate capital.

Cold Harbor is six or seven miles southwest of the Pamunkey crossing, and was then occupied only by a small force of the enemy. But when he discovered that the army of the Potomac was moving towards that point, Lee rapidly began to concentrate his forces in that direction, and, as usual, having the interior lines his route



was several miles shorter than Grant's. Sheridan had occupied Cold Harbor, from which he had repulsed the Confederate cavalry, and was instructed to hold it till the infantry could relieve him. But accidents are common in war, and usually occur at a most critical moment; and two incidents changed the fortunes of the Union Army at Cold Harbor. "Baldy" Smith's Eighteenth Corps was ordered from White House to Cold Harbor, a distance of twenty-five miles. But by a blunder, which directed him to Newcastle instead of Cold Harbor, he did not reach his destination until three o'clock in the afternoon of June 1st, while he was expected in the morning, and by that time his 12,500 men were worn out by their long and dusty march. This error, misdirecting Smith, came from Grant's headquarters, and was not discovered until Smith had marched several miles out of his way, when Grant hastened a staff officer to correct it. But valuable hours, sufficient to change the fate of a battle, had been lost in the counter march. Wright's Sixth and Smith's Eighteenth corps were pushed to the Harbor, and on June 1st relieved the gallant Sheridan from his perilous position.

At six o'clock in the afternoon the first assault was made by Wright and Smith, and a portion of the outer works was captured including several hundred prisoners; but the second line of works was too formidable for the two corps to attack with success. Meade directed Hancock, who was on the extreme right, to hasten to the



relief of Wright and Smith, and as the commander of the Second corps had never failed in any great exigency, he would not have failed at this time had it not been for an error committed by an officer of the engineer corps on Meade's staff. General Francis A. Walker, assistant adjutant general on Hancock's staff, makes the following comment on the costly error in his *History of the Second Corps*, but, presumably for charity's sake, he omits the name of the engineer: "Meade's order for Hancock to move promptly would have been fully carried out had it not been for the error of his staff officer, who undertook to conduct the column by a short cut through a wood road. After moving for some distance the road was found to narrow gradually, until finally the guns were fairly caught between the trees and unable to move. In the darkness much confusion arose throughout the column, and the troops became mixed to a degree which made it difficult to straighten them out again. The night had been intensely hot and breathless, and the march through roads deep with dust, which arose in suffocating clouds—which occurred through the wrong direction given to the column—put it out of General Hancock's power to reach the left of the line at Cold Harbor at daybreak on Thursday, the 2nd." The importance of holding Cold Harbor was as keenly realized by Grant as by Lee, and therefore he designed to give battle on Thursday morning, but the lateness of Hancock's arrival defeated his plans, and the hour fixed



for a final assault was on Friday morning, June 3rd, at half-past four o'clock.

The assault was made by the Second, Sixth, and Eighteenth corps. The men plunged into that raging hell of fire in the effort to drive the enemy from the pits. Much of the fighting was done within one hundred yards of each other. The two lines were swayed backward and forward under each other's blazing fire. It would require many pages to individualize the examples of courage and sacrifice among the officers and men of the assaulting corps. Men fell by the many hundreds in a few minutes. The third greatest loss sustained by any regiment in a single battle during the war in proportion to the number engaged, was in this attack. The Twenty-fifth Massachusetts in the Eighteenth corps, with 310 men, went into battle with splendid energy, and in fifteen minutes 74 officers and men went down to death and 122 were wounded. The regimental line seemed to melt away before the terrific fire from the enemy's pits. It was a pathetic scene when, on Saturday morning, only 4 officers and 62 men of the Twenty-fifth answered to the regimental roll call.

When the first terrible climax of battle was over, the cold fact confronted all the commanders that the strong intrenchments of the enemy, and the approaches to his lines being exceedingly difficult, made any further attack a needless waste of life. Therefore, two hours and a half after the assault was made, Grant gave Meade orders to suspend the offensive the moment it became



certain that a second assault would be unsuccessful.

The question uppermost in the mind of Meade and all other commanders was; would Grant renew the assault? But to those looking into the face of the mysterious Commander-in-chief for an answer to this momentous inquiry "there was no legible response. His was a face which tells no tales—a face impassive in victory or defeat, a face of stone—a sphinx-face!"

Grant's calm and instinctive judgment presided amidst the most horrible confusion. He appreciated fully the enormity of the loss of life and the suffering of the thousands of wounded men. But the army was there to fight; and believing in the old adage that the man is thrice armed who has his quarrel just, Grant could say emphatically that he proposed to fight it out on that line. From the manoeuvres of previous commanders on the Potomac, the idea prevailed in Lee's army that the Rapidan was the limit of Union advance; and therefore, after the severe repulse at Cold Harbor, Lee supposed that Grant had exhausted his courage and hope and would retreat northward. But Grant was on the south of the Rapidan to fight his battle of faith, and not to return until victory was won. He was preparing to furnish Lee one of the greatest surprises of the war.

Fighting ceased at Cold Harbor at seven-thirty o'clock in the morning, and during the forenoon Grant visited the corps commanders to see for himself "the different positions gained, and to receive their opinions as to the practicability of doing anything more in their



respective fronts." All except Warren of the Fifth corps thought nothing more could be done, and thus ended the battle of Cold Harbor.\*

The assault on the morning of the 3d of June has been so unsparingly condemned by certain military critics and so frankly acknowledged by Grant himself to have been in error, that Nicolay and Hay say, "we are apt to lose sight of the motive which prompted it. The right and left wings of Lee's army were unassailable from the nature of the ground; the front only appeared possible to attack. Grant was unwilling to go to the south of the James without one more attempt to accomplish the purpose with which he had opened the campaign. . . . If he had succeeded at Cold Harbor he might have achieved that great result. He knew the task was difficult—it proved to be impossible."

It ought to be remembered that as a rule the general who prosecutes an offensive campaign suffers greater losses than the enemy. Grant was always aggressive. It was not possible with him that retreat, or any inaction could form any part of his programme. But while

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\* Grant's losses from the day he entered the Wilderness to the beginning of his famous left flank movement from Cold Harbor, June 12, 1864, are given by the Adjutant General of the United States Army as follows:

Wilderness—May 5th to the 7th, killed, 2,261; wounded, 8,785; missing, 2,902—aggregate, 13,948. Spottsylvania—May 8th to the 21st, killed, 2,271; wounded, 9,360; missing, 1,970—aggregate 13,601. North Anna and vicinity—May 23d to the 31st, killed, 285; wounded, 1,150; missing, 217—aggregate, 1,652. Cold Harbor—June 1st to the 12th, killed, 1,769; wounded, 6,752; missing, 1,537—aggregate, 10,058. The total losses in the thirty-nine days were killed, 6,586, wounded, 26,047, missing, 6,626—aggregate, 39,259.



the campaign from Culpeper to Cold Harbor was boldly, even daringly offensive, it was so conducted that in nearly every conflict the enemy was obliged to become the attacking party; and this plan of campaigning against Lee recalls this colloquy between two Roman generals: "If thou are a great general, come down and fight me." "If thou are a great general *make* me come down and fight *thee*." And it will be observed that four times out of five—for the army had fought on five distinct lines—Grant, by a single march, had made Lee come down and fight him.

No other plan than that adopted could have succeeded; or, to alter a characteristic phrase from Stanton, Gabriel would have been blowing his last horn before the old tactics of the Army of the Potomac could have forced the surrender of Lee and his army.

Swinton, who wrote much about the war, was by no means a partisan of Grant, but speaking of the mystery of his movements up to Cold Harbor, he said: "It is a fact which you may not have thought of, that Grant, in his advance on Richmond, has crossed every line of operations that has ever been planned with Richmond as the objective. He has adopted none, he has bisected all. He is at present on the line of McClellan's peninsular campaign; but will he remain on it? May he not swing across that too?" And he did.

Grant had some cold and unjust critics in the North about this period in his Virginia campaign. Against their efforts to lower public estimation of his general-



ship, it is a pleasure to note the interest with which many Europeans viewed his marvellously aggressive and successful campaign. The *London Times*, the organ of all the tories of Europe, as well as of England, could not believe in the possibility of Grant's success. But after the Wilderness battles it was constrained to say: "Grant is invincibly obstinate, he has uncontrolled command, he has exacted the unreserved support of his government, and he has seen the southern army retire before him. He will perhaps renew his attacks upon Lee, but if he ever reaches Richmond with an effective army he will have achieved a miracle of success." And when the account of the battles at Spottsylvania had reached the "Thunderer" of British toryism, it was again candid enough to confess that while a single day of the battles of Grant in Virginia could be easily matched or excelled by the record of battles in the old world, there were never in the history of man four such battles fought as those comprised in seven successive days ending with the 12th of May.

So strangely did those battles impress the public mind, that the London correspondent of the *New York Herald* gave a clear idea of the pervading interest which existed in England relative to Grant as a commanding military strategist and genius. The reputation of Lee was so exalted in England that any success over him by Grant was deemed marvellous. In the lobby of either house of Parliament, at any club in London, ten to one the first question asked would be: "Any news from



America?" or, "What do you think of Lee's position?" The opinions and surmises as to Grant's performances and prospects were then more candid and sensible, so the correspondent thought, than at any time since the war began. No one then cared to bring ridicule upon himself by depreciating Grant's courage, strategy, and prospects. Even so great and conservative a journal as the London *Spectator* said if ever a general was entitled to have "Victory" inscribed on his banner, it was Grant, for his splendid fighting from the 5th to the 12th of May. And in addition to this, it was the opinion of an officer of high standing in the British army, that not since the art of war was practised, was better generalship, higher skill, or more persistent military perseverance in such circumstances ever known than that displayed by Grant.

No estimate of Grant's character is more defective than that which represents him as stolid, indifferent to the sacrifice of human life, winning victories by sheer dogged persistence and weight of numbers. He won his battles, as all great soldiers have done, by realizing difficulties, and meeting them as best he could with the men and guns at his command. While the attack on Friday morning, June 3d, may be a matter of legitimate controversy, these facts must be taken into account: "no opportunity had been offered Grant to make an adequate reconnaissance of the line to ascertain whether it could be carried in front;" the consequences of a victory here were so momentous that he seemed to be justified in



hazarding an assault; there is no foundation for the charge that the attack was inspired by mad recklessness and an insane determination; it was the deliberate judgment of both Grant and Meade that the real strength of the enemy's works could be tested only by a grand assault, and both were unwilling to pass Cold Harbor by without a second attempt to capture the works. Grant would gladly have escaped battle on Friday if such a thing were consistent with his pledge to the President and the confidence placed in him by the country. Bloody as was the first month of his campaign in Virginia, it was the only road to Richmond.\*

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\* It is the opinion of some critics that Grant showed inhumanity in delaying to take proper care of his wounded lying between the lines of the contending forces. But the official records do not sustain this condemnatory opinion. On the morning of the 5th, when Hancock informed Grant that there were still many wounded Union soldiers uncared for within the enemy's lines, the General at once sent a flag of truce to Lee asking permission to take charge of the wounded and bury the dead; but it was forty-eight hours after Grant's humane proposition reached Lee before that officer's punctiliousness as to terms was satisfied, and when the lines were reached by the parties bearing the white flag, all but two of the wounded were dead. For the official records relating to this matter see Grant's *Memoirs*, and the *Rebellion Records*, Serial 69, pp. 639-39; and also Colonel Livermore's contribution to the *Military History, Society of Mass.*, volume 5, p. 457.



## XXXI.

### ANOTHER LEFT FLANK—HOW PETERSBURG WAS LOST.



THE Richmond editor who said that Grant was enamoured of his left flank spoke more truthfully than he thought. It was by these left flank movements that Lee was disappointed and out-generaled. When Grant crossed to the south of the North Anna it was at a point where Lee did not expect; and when he recrossed the river it was at a place where Lee was not prepared to meet him. And the greatest surprise and disappointment came to Lee when Grant left Cold Harbor behind on Sunday, June 12th, and again took to his left flank. Where was he going? Lee did not know. When was he going? Lee did not learn until the mysterious little general was well on his way to the south of the James.

General Edward P. Alexander, chief of artillery of Longstreet's corps, says that the most natural movement for Grant to have made from Cold Harbor and the one Lee expected him to make, was that he would merely



cross the Chickahominy and take a position on the north bank of the James at Malvern Hill. But Grant's strategy and genius enabled him to formulate a movement more prodigious and hazardous than Lee believed him capable of conceiving or executing. His fixed purpose was to cross the James and move against Petersburg, and General Alexander says this movement, more than any other incident, constituted what may be called the crisis of the war. In the darkness of the night of June 12th, 1864, the Army of the Potomac, 115,000 strong, began the most remarkable march in its history.

Grant decided to cross to the south side of the James at Wilcox's Landing, between forty and fifty miles from Cold Harbor, at about the same distance in a southeasterly direction from Richmond; and nearly twenty miles east of Petersburg. This strange movement was entirely out of Lee's observation, as Grant planned that it should be, and General Alexander confesses that it involved the performance of a feat in transportation which has never been equalled, and might well be considered impossible without days of vexatious delay. But the army marched the distance and crossed the James without a mishap, and in the incredibly short space of three days; and while this bold movement was being made, Lee, with Longstreet's and Hill's corps, lay idle in the woods on the north side of the James.

General Alexander performed conspicuous service in Lee's command, and as he is a careful and candid critic,



his estimate of Grant's gigantic scheme to deceive the Confederate commander by crossing to the south of the James with such an immense army is worth quoting:

"The Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth corps on the (north) bank of the James awaited the construction of the greatest bridge which the world has seen since the days of Xerxes. At the point selected the river was 2,100 feet wide, ninety feet deep, and had a rise and fall of tide of four feet, giving a very strong current. The approaches having been prepared on each side, construction was begun at four o'clock P. M. on the 14th of June by Major Dunne, simultaneously at both ends. (101 pontoons formed the bridge which was completed by General Benham). In eight hours the bridge was finished, .

. . . and for forty-eight hours the vast column of artillery and infantry poured across without cessation, and at midnight of the 16th, Grant's entire army was south of the James."

One of the most remarkable incidents of this remarkable movement, was the singular condition of mind in which it placed Lee. At this time Beauregard was at Petersburg defending it with only a small force. On the 15th of June he reported to Lee, who was then at Drury's Bluff, south of Richmond, that Grant was approaching Petersburg and he begged for reinforcements. But Lee was so amazed by the report that he would not believe it. Fortunately, the *Rebellion Records* put the story of Lee's skepticism in an official form. He telegraphed Beauregard:



“June 16th, 10:30 A. M. I do not know the position of Grant’s army and cannot strip the north bank (the James) of troops.”

Beauregard, having had an unpleasant experience with Grant at Shiloh, became nervous and made another plea for reinforcements, to which Lee responded:

“June 17th, 12 M. Until I get more definite information of Grant’s movements I do not think it prudent to draw more troops to this side of the river.”

But Beauregard was insistent despite the incredulity of Lee, and with promptness and energy he called for more reinforcements. It was extremely difficult for the astute commander of the Army of Northern Virginia to imagine in what direction Grant had gone. Only five days before, the advance picket lines of the contending armies were not more than 300 yards apart; and for Grant to call in his pickets and move his great army out of the immediate presence of an alert enemy and take a line of march unknown to Lee or any of his generals, was the most remarkable of all the strategic movements of the war. The bewilderment in which Lee was placed by the report that some of Grant’s troops were in front of Petersburg, is shown in his third dispatch inquiring about Grant, sent to his son General William H. Fitzhugh Lee, who then had a cavalry command at Malvern Hill:

“Clay House, June 17, 1864, 3:30 P. M.

“Push after the enemy and endeavor to ascertain



what has become of Grant's army. Inform General Hill.  
R. E. LEE."

Three hours after Beauregard made his third request for more troops he sent the following doleful dispatch to Lee: "The increasing number of the enemy in my front . . . will compel me to fall back within a shorter line which I will attempt to-night . . . I may have to evacuate the city (Petersburg) very shortly." But Lee was as hard to convince as was doubting Thomas. He wanted an ocular witness of Grant's army having crossed the James river before he could believe that such an extraordinary movement was possible. So within an hour after the dispatch had been sent his son, Lee asked Beauregard: "Has Grant been seen crossing the James?"

In the meantime Beauregard was putting forth all his strength to hold Petersburg against the encroachment of the Federal forces; but having lost some outer lines, and no fresh troops coming to his relief, he took more radical measures to convince Lee that the situation in Petersburg was becoming desperate. General Alexander says that Beauregard finally sent three of his staff officers to Lee, one after the other, within two hours, "with details about the prisoners captured from different corps of the Federal army, with stories told of their marches since leaving Cold Harbor on the 12th." It was not until after midnight of the 17th, that the first staff officer found Lee, lying on the ground near



Drury's Bluff. He "seemed very placid," says Alexander, "and heard my messages, but still said he thought Beauregard mistaken in supposing that any large part of Grant's army had crossed the river." Lee finally ordered reinforcements to Petersburg just in the nick of time to save the city from falling into the hands of the Union forces; but it was the persistency of Beauregard in calling for troops to defend Petersburg that gave truth to the saying that he, and not Lee, saved the Confederacy from collapse in the summer of 1864.

Grant's left flank movement across the James was his masterpiece of strategy. Its boldness and brilliancy of conception have been duly acknowledged by the ablest military critics of this and other countries. While his Vicksburg campaign is regarded by some—particularly by General Alexander—the most brilliant exhibition of strategy of the whole war, it must be remembered that Vicksburg had its advantages. Grant's army was then comparatively small. He was in personal command of all the troops. There was hardly a possibility that any fatal blunder could be committed at the very point of success as at Petersburg. At the latter place it seemed impossible for the Commander-in-chief to provide against the mistaken judgment of some of his subordinates; and whether Grant was in any wise responsible for any part of the distressing failure and the heavy losses in the first attempt to capture Petersburg, the reader must judge for himself after carefully reading both sides of the controversy.



Never during the Civil War was such a golden opportunity presented to the Federal army to win so important a victory at so small a cost as the capture of Petersburg, on the 15th of June, 1864. That the city was not taken on that day, or at least on the 16th, when the Union forces were four times greater in number than those of the enemy, was the most grievous disappointment that came to Grant in his military career.

There has been much controversy over the loss of Petersburg at the time referred to, and as the reputation of neither Grant nor Meade would suffer by the publication of the facts bearing upon the subject, it is strange on the one hand that the *Memoirs* and most of the friendly biographers of Grant have given either a meagre account thereof or have practically ignored it; and on the other hand, it is unfortunate that some of Meade's sympathetic friends have entered into the discussion with a bias and severity of temper not warranted by the facts.

Human nature always craves for the reason of things which are of importance; and it is all-important to know why Grant failed at Petersburg, because the mistakes and failures at that time postponed the fall of Richmond and the collapse of the Confederacy, from the summer or autumn of 1864 to the spring of 1865. To give the reader an intelligible account of the disjointed and disconnected affairs of the 15th, and if possible, to disentangle the widely varying statements concerning the events which led to the tragedy immediately



following the historic crossing of the James, require somewhat expansive details for which there is no space in this volume.

There is no doubt that Grant would have been pleased if the honor of taking Petersburg could have fallen to the lot of Butler, who had been unfortunate in his operations south of Richmond. On the 14th of June Grant visited him at Bermuda Hundred for the purpose of directing an immediate attack against Petersburg with "Baldy" Smith's Eighteenth corps (a part of Butler's command). Butler then thought—so it is reported—that "he could ride over the enemy's fortifications on horseback" without serious molestation. Grant had established his headquarters at City Point, ten miles up the James from Wilcox's Landing, and a few miles below Bermuda Hundred, that he might be at a convenient distance between the commands of Meade and Butler.

If Grant had formulated a definite plan for the capture of Petersburg, he certainly did not communicate it to Meade, nor does he include it in the *Memoirs*. But what followed after the consultation with Butler on the night of the 14th of June, I give in Grant's own words:

"I communicated to Meade in writing the directions I had given him to cross Hancock's corps at midnight and push forward in the morning (the 15th) to Petersburg, halting them, however, at a designated point until they could hear from Smith. I also informed Meade that I had ordered rations for Hancock's corps. . . .



The rations did not reach him, however, and Hancock, while he got all his troops over during the night, remained until half past ten in the hope of receiving them. He then moved without them, and on the road received a note from Smith asking him to come on. This seems to be the first information that Hancock had received of the fact that he was to go to Petersburg, or that anything particular was expected of him, otherwise he would have been there by 4 o'clock in the afternoon."

Here begins the misunderstanding connected with the ill-fated June the fifteenth. Grant says the directions were given to Meade in writing, while Badeau, Grant's military secretary, in his *Military History of U. S. Grant*, says the directions were given in a conversation on the night of the 14th. Further, the quotation from the *Memoirs* contains a seeming reflection upon Meade, to the effect that the orders given him relative to the movement of the Second corps had not been properly communicated to Hancock. When the latter was criticised by newspaper correspondents, and the Secretary of War, for not reaching Petersburg at an earlier hour than 6:30 P. M. (June 15th), Meade said on June 26th: "Had Hancock and myself been apprised in time of the contemplated movement against Petersburg, and the necessity of coöperation, he could have been pushed much earlier to the scene of operation."

Although the *Memoirs* seem to involve Meade in an error in not communicating to Hancock Grant's orders as to his movement towards Petersburg (the orders were



incapable of execution), the Military History of U. S. Grant, already referred to, and which was reckoned official by Grant himself, says: "Hancock moved exactly as he had been ordered. . . . Grant found no fault with Meade or Hancock, and so informed them. To the intimation that they had not been properly informed as to his plans (to attack Petersburg) Grant made no reply."

Upon the pages of history no one can be found with a stronger sense of justice, mingled with rare wisdom, or who more earnestly and successfully endeavored to possess a conscience void of offence towards his fellows, than Grant. He never designedly became the author of confusion or misunderstanding; and this can be justly said of Meade during his campaign with Grant in Virginia.

Shortly after the strange events of which I am writing, the Commander-in-chief paid deserved and glowing tributes to Meade and Hancock for their services in the Petersburg campaign, and it is regrettable that those tributes, so warmly given and so richly deserved, do not appear on the pages of the *Memoirs* which treat of the attacks on that city. But it must be borne in mind that when Grant wrote the volumes which "breathe so much sincerity and try as best they can to give the whole truth," the "hand of death was upon him and he was passing through the furnace of pain;" and the wonder is that so few errors of commission or omission are found in that great work. Those warm compliments,



uttered when the scene of that terrible conflict was fresh in his mind, should have been made a part of the chapter on Petersburg, that full justice might have been done those two brave soldiers, who, like Grant himself, and Sherman, Sheridan, Warren, Humphreys, Rawlins, Gibbon, Birney, and others, died in the prime of life because of exhaustion of their vital forces during the war.

The story of the "misunderstandings and miscarriages" which led to the defeat of the main purpose of the movement to the south of the James—so skilfully planned and brilliantly executed—is one of the most painful in the Civil War history. Those who wish to make the attempt to clear from complication the varying accounts of the work of June the fifteenth, are referred to the Military History of U. S. Grant; Bache's and Pennypacker's lives of Meade; The History of the Second Army Corps by General Francis A. Walker, assistant Adjutant General of the Corps; The Virginia Campaign, '64 and '65, by General Andrew A. Humphreys; and the official correspondence, orders, and reports in relation to Petersburg, in the Fortieth volume, series 1, part 2, of the *Records of the Rebellion*. To anyone who is interested in the lives of Grant, Meade, and Hancock and particularly in the story of the 15th of June, "the black Wednesday in the calendar of the gallant Hancock and his superb fighting corps," a careful examination of those authorities is worth while. Particular emphasis should be placed on the testimony of Meade,



Hancock, Humphreys, and Walker, all of whom actively participated in the Petersburg campaign, especially as the works of the two latter stand unchallenged among unprejudiced historians on all material points.

“Unfortunately,” says General Walker, “the misunderstandings and mistakes of the 15th were carried into the 16th permitting the Confederates to strengthen and finally confirm their hold on Petersburg, which the excellent strategy of Grant had, for thirty-six hours, placed fairly at the mercy of the Union army.” The 16th was the anniversary of the chief blunder of Napoleon at Waterloo which caused his star of destiny to set forever. While there was no Grouchy in the Eighteenth Corps or in the Army of the Potomac, there were delays, mistakes, and disjointed movements which vastly increased the difficulty of successfully assaulting the works at Petersburg.

Circumstances seemed strangely to combine against the purposes of Grant and to defeat the best laid plans of Meade and Hancock to seize Petersburg, which would have resulted in driving Lee out of Virginia. Between the evening of the 15th and the forenoon of the 16th, the enemy’s forces behind the works had been augmented to 14,000, and Meade’s army, then up at Petersburg, was not less than 50,000.

While Hancock was unacquainted with the real character and position of the Confederate works, and had but little time to make a reconnaissance, as early as 2 o’clock on the morning of the 16th he issued explicit



orders to his division commanders to attack the enemy in their respective points, on or before daylight—preferably before. But fate seemed inexorable; and “no vigorous effort appears to have been made at daylight to carry out Hancock’s instructions.” The losses during the day were heavy, and darkness closed upon the scene without any encouraging gains having been made.

A great misfortune of the 17th—a day as full of discouragement as the 15th or the 16th—was the necessity of relieving Hancock from the command of the Second Corps. After forty days of continuous riding in the saddle, and taking the lead in all the bloody battles and assaults from Culpeper to Petersburg, the severe wound he had received at Gettysburg broke out afresh and caused him intense suffering, and the command of the corps was temporarily given to General Birney.

Saturday, the 18th, saw the severest fighting of the week. It is claimed by the Confederates that on their side it was not a day of battle, but only one of demonstration and reconnaissance. “None of their reinforcements were engaged, the only fighting done having been by Hoke’s division and Wise’s brigade, who, under Beauregard, had already borne the whole brunt of the four days and three nights.” And General Alexander adds: “No army could ask for a more favorable chance to destroy its antagonists than was here presented (to the Federals). Their whole army was at hand and the reinforcements of Longstreet’s corps, even now coming



to Beauregard, were not over 12,000 men and were still about three to five hours away. The little which was accomplished during the whole day is striking evidence of the condition to which the Federal army had now been reduced."

Grant being at City Point on Saturday, Meade was in command of all the troops engaged. He had set his heart on capturing the city, and determined to make one supreme effort to succeed. He had some 55,000 men, and behind the works Beauregard could not have had more than 30,000 up to Saturday noon. Meade firmly believed that with such superior force, in a simultaneous movement of all the corps, he would win. He therefore ordered a general assault to begin at precisely twelve o'clock. But for one reason or another the commanders were not prepared to make a concerted movement at the hour named, and the delay greatly inured to the advantage of the enemy. While the assaults, made in the afternoon, were vigorous and persistent, though somewhat disjointed, they failed to break the enemy's lines. It was a day of great sacrifice; and it became apparent to Meade at 5 o'clock in the afternoon that any further attempt to assault the enemy's works would result only in a useless loss of life, and no more attacks were made.

Grant was confident that Meade had done all that any general could do to carry the day; and he recognized the fact, particularly on "black Saturday," that Meade was "the incarnation of splendid vigor, courage, and energy." And immediately after the final assault



on that day he sent a dispatch to him to the effect that he was perfectly satisfied that all had been done that could have been done, and ordered that more spades and fewer rifles be used, and by this means the long siege of Petersburg began.

But the "divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will," had ordained that Grant's disappointment and mortification over the affairs at Petersburg should not end with the last assault on the 18th of June.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pleasants, of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania Infantry, a practical coal miner, as were all the men of his regiment, conceived and carefully thought out the bold plan of tunnelling under the enemy's most important works, and planting a mine which, when exploded, would spread such consternation among the Confederates as would enable the Federal troops to storm the fortification easily and capture the city. Grant says that the plans of the tunnel were submitted to Meade and himself and that both agreed as to the practicability of the scheme; but the biographers of Meade say that he had no faith in the measure, but when it was adopted he took every precaution to overcome the difficulties which he clearly foresaw. The work began in front of Burnside's corps during the last week in June, and although it was over 500 feet long, and contained many galleries it was completed on the 23d of July. It was charged with 8,000 or 10,000 pounds of powder, and was the longest siege tunnel



ever run. Both Grant and Meade were at Burnside's headquarters at this time, personally looking after some of the more important details that everything might work exactly as they would have it—each going to the limit of his power to bring about a brilliant conclusion to the unique affair.

The hour appointed for the springing of the mine was 3:30 Saturday morning, July 30th. It was an hour of great expectation. Grant and Meade seemed confident that an open door had been found through which the Federal troops could march victoriously into Petersburg. The parting of the fuse caused a wearisome delay of one hour and fifteen minutes, but when the connection was made and the fire applied quickly there came a great ground swell, with a trembling as if it had been the work of an earthquake. In a moment more came the terrific explosion. Huge masses of earth were lifted as easily "as a child would toss a marble." Men, guns, cannon, caissons, and timbers belched forth high in air and descended immediately around the crater (150 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 30 feet deep) in a shapeless, chaotic mass.

Simultaneously with the explosion, 150 heavy cannon, mortars, and field pieces opened a terrific cannonade upon the terrified and almost panic-stricken enemy. It was the special business of Burnside to use the Ninth Corps in storming the enemy's works immediately following the explosion. Explicit instructions had been given him by Meade as to what to do and how to do it;



with those instructions promptly carried out the way was clear to the heart of the city. "But no human foresight can guard against the machinations of stupidity." Among other things, all corps commanders had been ordered to remove all obstructions between them and the enemy's works, that nothing might prevent the storming column from making a rapid and effective advance. Four divisions had been selected by Burnside to storm the works, one of which was colored. But for reasons which seem incredible, he did not obey this vital order; and the division which was appointed to lead in the assault was the least capable, on account of the inefficiency of its commander—General Ledlie—to perform such an important service.

The remainder of the story is appalling evidence of how the movements went contrary to the well laid plans of Grant and Meade. In advancing, Ledlie's division huddled into the crater, and the commander sought refuge in a bomb-proof. The other divisions found difficulty in pushing forward because of obstacles which Burnside had neglected to remove, and of the crowding of too many troops in a limited space. If they had spread out to the right and left flanks as they had been ordered to do before the movement began, the enemy's works could have been easily captured.

From the moment of the explosion the affair was a bungle, a stupendous failure; more than that, a crime. The delay in making the assault as ordered, gave the Confederates ample time to recover from their panic-



stricken condition and to reinforce their lines in front of the storming column; and thus for the third time, in Grant's effort to capture Petersburg in the gloomy summer of 1864, the fates were against him. After many vain attempts to drive the enemy from his works with troops more or less disorganized, Grant made an inspection of the situation, and when he saw how little had been gained and how great were the losses, he concluded that any further efforts to capture the city would result only in a useless sacrifice of life, and at 2 o'clock in the afternoon the strange catastrophe of affairs at Petersburg came to an end.

According to the Medical Department, 4008 Union soldiers were taken from the ranks on that day, 419 killed, 1,670 wounded, and 1,910 missing, all due, to use Grant's own words, "to the inefficiency on the part of the corps commander (Burnside) and the incompetency of the division commander (Ledlie) who was sent to lead the assault."

Strange indeed is the story of the tragedy at Petersburg. In blasted hopes and disaster there is nothing more painful in the history of the Civil War. One month before the attack on the 15th of June the city was practically defenceless, and Generals W. F. Smith and Q. A. Gillmore, both serving under Butler in the Army of the James, recognizing that Petersburg, next to Richmond, was the most strategic point in the Confederacy, asked permission of Butler to move upon the city and hold it permanently. They were then only



three miles from the ungarrisoned place, and could have taken it with little or no loss. But Butler, whom Hosmer in his *Outcome of the Civil War* calls the "Grouchy of the Wilderness campaign," curtly refused.

The Grant of Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and of the campaign which culminated in the miracle of moving his army to the south of the James, on the morning of the 15th of June would have rationed Hancock's corps of 20,000 (not 28,000 as is often erroneously stated), and marched the sixteen miles to Petersburg in time to capture the city before the setting of the sun. But no general in the army was more considerate towards his subordinates than Grant. Because of this he kept some of them in position when they should have been relieved from duty for the good of the service. It was only when bearing a load of tremendous responsibility and the exigencies of the case demanded prompt action, that he deprived them of their commands.

Butler, "for reasons other than military," had been placed in command of the James before Grant took command of all the armies, and in this instance it seemed advisable to the Commander-in-chief to reckon with him; believing, no doubt from Butler's statements as to the works at Petersburg, that the capture of the city by Smith alone would come as a joy as well as a surprise to Meade and his army. But the misinformation furnished Grant, at Bermuda Hundred, on the night of the 14th of June, both as to the strength of the



enemy's works and the route Hancock should take in marching to Petersburg, was the direct cause of the unsuccessful assaults which consumed an army of 14,585 Union men—1,298 being killed, 7,474 wounded, and 1,814 missing, from the 15th to the 18th of June.

The mystery of Grant's character did not stand out more impressively at Shiloh, Vicksburg, or Chattanooga than thus far during the Virginia campaign. Under other commanders "Lee had seen the Army of the Potomac retreat from his front four times, once from the Peninsula, once across the Rappahannock, in 1862; and once again across the Rappahannock, and once across the Rapidan in 1863." But Lee never saw Grant lose an inch of ground. From the hour of crossing the Rapidan on May 4th, he went steadily, sturdily forward, repelling, and impelling attacks; assaulting (when to him it seemed necessary) strongly fortified positions, effecting difficult and daring flank movements, and all this with a stern quietude that indicated reserve force and a consciousness of powers adapted to almost any emergency.

For this campaign, made with such unconquerable obstinacy, resoluteness, and terrible impressiveness, and which sounded the doom of the Confederacy, Grant was severely criticised by many for what seemed to them to be a reckless waste of human life. But if the Army of the Potomac under his command were to go forward, never again to retreat, he could not escape the Wilderness nor Spottsylvania; and Cold Harbor was one of



those costly experiments which war sometimes makes necessary.

The whole movement southward from the Rapidan so completely approached the marvellous in matchless persistence and unequalled strategy, that in this connection a quotation from Colonel Thomas L. Livermore of Massachusetts, a careful writer of Civil War history, is of interest: "From the camps north of the Rapidan to the James, the army moved over one hundred miles, crossing three rivers in the face of the enemy, making nine flank movements without a miscarriage or a surprise. The sick and wounded, excepting a few who perished between the lines, were taken up and transported to the rear with the most perfect method of humanity. The army was well fed, well clothed, and well sheltered. The daily percentage of sick, in May, was less than in June, and was almost the same as it was in camp in April. A supply train of 4,000 wagons and a long train of reserve artillery were so well protected in their movements that not a gun, or wagon, or an animal was taken by the enemy; and not a dollar's worth of material was abandoned or destroyed to save it from the enemy."

During the movement from the Rapidan to Petersburg, with all its terrible strain and hardship, Grant's physical, mental, nervous, temperamental strength was little less than marvellous. His conduct at this time was an exhibition of self-mastery of which only the highest type of manhood is capable. Though sorely disap-



pointed at the failure to take Petersburg, he was able to repel discouragement, and in the face of severe and unjust criticism by his enemies, his indomitable mind enabled him to manifest resolute quietness; and when it became evident to him that the city could not be taken by assault or mine explosions, he took a calm survey of the situation south of Richmond and of the operations of the armies in other departments, and immediately began to plan campaigns which would make the downfall of the Confederacy inevitable.



## XXXII.

### IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHENANDOAH.



EARLY in the campaign of 1864 Grant saw the necessity of driving the enemy from the Valley of the Shenandoah, the most fertile region in Virginia, about 150 miles in extent from north to south, and varying from 30 to 40 miles in width. It is bounded on the east by the Blue Ridge, a continuation of the South Mountain of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and its western limit is the North Mountain, a part of the main chain of the Alleghanies. The valley has been called "secession's fertile incubator and truck garden". The southern end being a considerable distance west from Richmond and thence running northeasterly toward Washington, it was the favorite manoeuvring ground of the enemy early in the war, and furnished the Confederates an open and protected road for the invasion of the North.

General Franz Sigel, who was in command in this district, under instruction from Grant moved up the



Shenandoah and engaged the enemy under Breckenridge at New Market, May 15th, but was entirely defeated, losing artillery, supplies, and a thousand prisoners. He was relieved of his command and General David Hunter was chosen for the place. On the 20th, and again on the 25th of May, Grant wrote to Halleck urging that Hunter press forward and destroy canals and railroads to prevent Lee's army from getting further supplies. Hunter marched rapidly up the river, engaged the enemy near Staunton, and completely routed him, taking 1500 prisoners; but Lee poured reinforcements into the Valley and Hunter found it necessary to retreat to the westward and make a long circuit back to Harper's Ferry.

This left the Valley open, and General Jubal Early, in command of a considerable force, moved northward with the intention of threatening Washington and compelling Grant either to make a premature attack upon the works at Petersburg or practically to abandon the siege. So rapidly did Early move that by the 10th of July his camp was but a few miles from the capital. A careful survey on the following day convinced him that the crowning achievement of the war was possibly within his grasp; but before his orders could be executed he saw to his dismay the works which had been but feebly manned filled by fresh bodies of defenders, so that he was compelled to withdraw. It was a bold move and caused much anxiety in Washington and at the North. So near to the city did the enemy come



that a skirmish took place on the 11th in full view of the capital, and was witnessed by President Lincoln, who watched the progress of the fight until an officer fell mortally wounded within three feet of him.

As soon as Grant knew of the gravity of the situation he sent parts of the Sixth (Wright's) and the Nineteenth Corps to the relief of the capital. They arrived in the nick of time and made Early's withdrawal necessary. It was the desire of the President that the flying enemy should be pursued. If an aggressive man had been in charge, the force might have been annihilated; but Halleck was timid and irresolute, and Grant was too far away to feel certain as to what course to pursue, although he had, on July 14th, urged a pursuit "by veterans, militiamen on horseback, and everything that could be got to follow, to eat out Virginia, clear and clean as far as they go, so that crows flying over it for the balance of the season will have to carry their provender with them." But messages and orders crossed each other and produced confusion, so that Early, finding that he was not pursued, turned and drove the Union forces across the Potomac and sent a part of his command to terrorize the small towns in Maryland and on the Pennsylvania border, exacting heavy ransoms or applying the torch.

It did not require the genius of Grant to perceive that the situation required a competent and aggressive leader in the upper Potomac; but it did require the genius of Grant to select such a leader. In that sec-



tion of the field of war, confusion and disorder reigned. Grant, being at City Point, where it was necessary for him to establish his headquarters, could not attend personally to the details of the upper and lower Potomac at the same time. Things were going wrong in the northern part of the field, chiefly because the Administration was unwilling to adopt promptly the important measures he had urgently recommended.

The general whom Grant most trusted and loved was Sherman, and next to him was the gallant McPherson, whose death in the battle before Atlanta on July 22nd, 1864, caused Grant unspeakable grief. After that calamity, Sheridan took McPherson's place in Grant's confidence and affection, and there he reigned without a rival till death parted them. Therefore, when Grant wanted a general to put an end to the disturbed condition of things in and about Washington, and to command all the troops in the field which were to operate against Early and drive him and his army from the valley of the Shenandoah, he promptly appointed Sheridan.

The event which placed Early at the tender mercy of Sheridan occurred on the last day of July, and on the following day the latter met Grant at City Point, where the helplessness of the authorities at Washington to remove the troublesome condition of matters in the upper Potomac was talked over in detail. Each understood the other thoroughly, and the all-important feature of the affair was that Grant's confidence that Sheri-



dan would become master of the Shenandoah was as unshaken as the foundation of the Blue Ridge. On the 2nd of August Sheridan departed for Washington. Preceding him by one day was a dispatch from Grant to Halleck which read as follows:

"I am sending General Sheridan for temporary duty whilst the enemy is being expelled from the border. Unless General Hunter is in the field in person I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also."

When Sheridan reached Washington to receive instructions from Halleck, the Secretary of War objected to the appointment of so young a man for so great a command and so large a responsibility, and the President was of like mind; "but now," to quote Lincoln's remarks to Sheridan, "since Grant has ploughed round the difficulties of the situation by picking you out to command the boys in the field, I feel satisfied with what has been done and hope for the best."

An incident of remarkable interest is connected with the dispatch which Grant sent to Halleck. President Lincoln happened to see the dispatch, and not attempting to conceal his disgust with the war office in its management of the operations in the upper Potomac, he went to the expense of violating all official etiquette by immediately sending to Grant the following characteristic message:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 3, 1864.

"*Lieut.-Gen. Grant, City Point, Va.:*

"I have seen your dispatch, in which you say, 'I want Sheri-



dan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go also." This, I think, is exactly right as to how our forces should move. But please look over the dispatches you may have received from here, even since you made that order, and discover if you can, that there is any idea in the head of any one here of 'putting our army south of the enemy' or of 'following him to the death' in any direction. I repeat to you, it will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it every day, and hour, and force it.

"A. LINCOLN."

It was not necessary for Grant to read between the lines of this message to understand its full import. At once he saw clearly that the President's mind was burdened because of the confusion and inactivity which prevailed in that part of the field; and in two hours after the message was received the General was off for the North; but he did not stop at Washington. He did not want to meet Halleck nor Stanton, lest they might urge a change in his plans. He knew how "to follow the enemy to the death," and being determined not to have his purpose interfered with, he proceeded directly to Monocacy, near Frederick, Maryland, where he found Hunter. When Grant asked him where the enemy was, he replied that he did not know. He was so confused by contradictory orders from Washington moving him right and left that he had lost all trace of the enemy. Under Grant's directions the enemy was soon found and instructions were given to Hunter how to proceed. In a perfectly frank and genuinely patriotic spirit General Hunter suggested that it might be



better for some one else to take command, and offered to retire. Grant eagerly accepted the generous offer and immediately telegraphed General Sheridan, who came by special train. Only the three generals and their staffs were at the station at Monocacy when the transfer was made and Sheridan was given command of the newly organized Middle Military Division, with the instructions which had been prepared for Hunter, two paragraphs of which are so characteristic of Grant that I insert them:

"In pushing up the Shenandoah Valley, as it is expected you will have to go first or last, it is desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. Take all provisions, forage, and stock wanted for the use of your command. Such as cannot be consumed, destroy. It is not desirable that the buildings should be destroyed—they should rather be protected; but the people should be informed that so long as an army can subsist among them, recurrences of these raids must be expected, and we are determined to stop them at all hazards.

"Bear in mind, the object is to drive the enemy south; and to do this you want to keep him always in sight. Be guided in your course by the course he takes."\*

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\* It was at this period that much discontent prevailed in the North because of the draft for more troops. The opinion was widespread that Grant could reduce Richmond without the addition of a single man. His belief was expressed in a letter to his friend Washburne, that if the noncombatants in the North were as buoyant and full of hope as the men who were doing the fighting, and that if the draft was quietly enforced, the enemy would become despondent and make but little resistance. Fresh troops were needed, and the General urged the draft for the reason that it would be unjust to the men who had gone through so many battles to subject them to another series of engagements, when it was within his power so soon and so largely to reinforce them and thus distribute the loss, if further losses were necessary, among a larger number; or by means of a larger army, to achieve the same end with a far less sacrifice of life.



Philip H. Sheridan, only 33 years old, a graduate of West Point, a born leader of men, combining untiring energy, dauntless courage, ardent enthusiasm and cool judgment, was an ideal man for the position. Grant asked him if he could be ready by Tuesday morning (August 9th). "Yes, and before; on Monday morning before daylight," Sheridan responded. Grant was delighted and laconically said, "Go in." In his report he says: "He was off promptly on time; and I may here add, that I have never since deemed it necessary to visit General Sheridan before giving him orders."

Sheridan's subordinates were men who outranked and in some cases had commanded him. They took up their work without a murmur, while a brilliant group of younger men, Crook, Merritt, Custer and Charles Russell Lowell, eagerly followed the lead of their young commander.

With a force of 26,000 men Sheridan now began a campaign as terrible as it was brilliant, for it became necessary in order to prevent supplies being sent to the Confederate army to turn the garden of Virginia into a desert. As the Union forces swept up the valley they gathered in crops and cattle, whatever they could use or what might be of use to the enemy. What they could not take away was destroyed. In a series of hard-fought battles during September, Sheridan beat the enemy back to the southward until his communication with Washington was cut off and the President became



anxious about him. He was afraid that Early would get in behind him and that reinforcements would be sent out from Richmond to overwhelm him, but Grant assured the President that he would keep Lee busy. Accordingly on the 28th of September, he ordered an advance on Richmond; but after desperate fighting in which heavy losses were sustained the works of the enemy were found to be too strong to be carried by assault, and the two opposing armies maintained their relative position to the close of the siege.

The Confederate commander made a serious blunder in failing to reckon with Grant as a master of strategy. He seemed to suppose that because Petersburg had not been taken, Grant would sit down in hopeless inactivity behind his earthworks till something should turn up that would compel him to embark his army—as it was once embarked before under a different commander—to steam down the James and up the Potomac. That “turning up of something,” Lee took upon himself to supply by sending a large portion of his army into Shenandoah. But Grant did not steam down the James nor up the Potomac. It was his purpose—boldly but carefully conceived—to make Lee act in obedience to the movements of the Federal army, and to turn the garden of the Shenandoah into a Valley of Humiliation and Desolation to the enemy; and how well Grant’s purpose was executed the sequel will show.

After Sheridan’s magnificent victory over Early at Winchester, on September 19th, he determined to make



a practical application of Grant's letter of instructions in so desolating the Shenandoah Valley "that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return;" or, to use Sheridan's own words, he proposed "to make the country untenable for permanent occupation by the Confederates." In Grant's opinion it was the only way to terminate the Valley campaign effectually.

In a few days the Valley from mountain to mountain was the scene of a conflagration such as had not been witnessed during the war. All things upon which the enemy could subsist were destroyed. It was not a measure of retaliation for the wanton devastation of northern towns and property, as had been falsely supposed, but a stern necessity of war. The Valley was being treated as it should have been treated at first, but the event was not without a humane feature. All families who desired to do so were provided with transportation north, and with so much of their household effects and such quantity of provisions as their necessities required. The laying waste of the Shenandoah was a crushing blow to the Confederates, and the battle which soon followed effectually closed the Valley, which for a long time, had been the race course of the Confederate army.

Sheridan had been so successful in his Shenandoah campaign that it was thought possible to detach a part of his command for service elsewhere. Plans were made and orders given to this effect, and Sheridan himself went to Washington, October 15th, to confer with the authorities, leaving his army at Cedar Creek,



twenty miles south of Winchester, under command of General Wright. His errand over, Sheridan started to return and reached Winchester on the evening of the 18th. Hearing that all was well at the front he slept soundly and after breakfast rode leisurely on to join his command. As he advanced he was disturbed by the increasing rumble of distant cannon, and soon he began to meet groups of fugitives and provision trains hastening to the rear. He ordered the brigade at Winchester to arrest all flight and pressed toward the front. By rebuke, entreaty, imprecations, and commands he turned back the stream of frightened men, rallied and reorganized them, and changed them from a disordered mob into a resistless army. Possibly never in the history of war was there a finer exhibition of the personal power of leader to change defeat into victory. What had happened was this: From the top of the mountain of the preceding day the Confederate officers had made a survey of the Union camp, and before daylight a sudden and impetuous attack was made, completely surprising the Federals, who were thrown into confusion. Under the gallant leadership of Rutherford B. Hayes, Ricketts, Getty, and Lewis A. Grant, portions of the army fought with desperate valor and held the field until Sheridan arrived, when the reorganized and inspirited forces hurled themselves upon the enemy and swept them across the river, to be pursued by the cavalry until they melted away into the surrounding country. The victory was complete. All that had



been lost in the early morning was recovered, many guns and a large amount of camp equipment were captured, and the enemy was demoralized.\*

As might be expected, this victory was hailed with boundless enthusiasm in the North. Sheridan was the hero of the hour and the President hastened to make him a major-general in the regular army. But amid the general rejoicing there was none who was better satisfied than the silent commander who had planned the movement and selected its leader. Almost eclipsed for the time, and suffering from humiliating failure at Petersburg through no fault of his own, he was well content to see the cause triumph and to have a fellow soldier receive his due meed of praise. He telegraphed Secretary Stanton, "I had a salute of one hundred guns fired from each of the armies here, in honor of Sheridan's last victory. Turning what bid fair to be disaster into a glorious victory stamps Sheridan, what I have always thought him, one of the ablest of generals."

When General Grant assumed the command of all the Union forces, the understanding with General Sherman was that he should march against General J. E. Johnston, prevent him from joining Lee, destroy his army if possible, and capture Atlanta, the southern stronghold of the Confederacy. The contest between

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\* The brilliant victory at Cedar Creek has been made the subject of a famous poem entitled "Sheridan's Ride," by Thomas Buchanan Read (1865). It has been rendered with stirring effect by many readers, but more especially by America's most distinguished elocutionist, James E. Murdock.



Sherman and Johnston was a battle of giants, well matched in courage and skill. With the three armies, the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Ohio, commanded by Thomas, McPherson, and Schofield, Sherman left Chattanooga May 7th, 1864, and after a series of fierce battles succeeded by the 10th of July in shutting up Johnston's army in the defences of Atlanta. At this crisis Johnston was superseded by General J. B. Hood, who was more aggressive but lacked the caution and skill of his predecessor. On the 20th, 22nd, and 28th of July, Hood made three desperate assaults on the Union Army, in one of which (the 22nd) the gallant and beloved General McPherson was killed, and Hood was repulsed with heavy losses. By an incautious move his army became divided and Sherman marched into Atlanta, September 2nd. Hood now moved northward into Tennessee, fought his way as far as Nashville, and with his army of 50,000 men invested the city, which was defended by the army of the Cumberland under General Thomas. Grant was greatly concerned about the situation, and, fearful that the cautious Thomas would delay too long, started west to take command in person; but when he reached Washington he received a dispatch from Thomas, December 15th, announcing his attack upon the enemy. In a battle that lasted two days Hood's army was practically annihilated and the judgment and generalship of Thomas were completely vindicated.



A month before the battle at Nashville, Sherman began his famous march to the sea. There has been some misunderstanding, as well as careless writing as to who projected the movement—Grant or Sherman. In his Autobiography, Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) makes Grant say a short time before his death: “Neither of us originated the idea of Sherman’s march to the sea. The enemy did it.” But this quotation, if correctly given by Mr. Clemens, needs explanation. Only the official records can clearly and satisfactorily settle the authorship of the idea of “Marching through Georgia.”

In the latter part of October, 1864, General Hood was contemplating his invasion of Tennessee and Kentucky. At that time Sherman was at Rome, Georgia, making his own plans for a campaign through Georgia. On the 1st of November Grant, then at City Point, asked Sherman by telegraph if he did not think it advisable “now that Hood has gone so far north, to entirely ruin him before you start on your proposed campaign”? On the next day Sherman answered that if he could hope to overhaul Hood, he would turn upon him with his whole force, but in that event he thought Hood would probably retreat southwest to try to decoy him (Sherman) away from Georgia, which was his chief objective point. Sherman added that General Thomas would have force enough to prevent Hood from reaching any country in which the Union Forces had an interest.



Later in the day of November 2nd, Sherman sent another dispatch to Grant in which he stated: "If I turn back (to follow Hood) the whole effect of my campaign will be lost." Grant, having as much confidence in Sherman as he had in himself, immediately sent back the message: "I do not see that you can withdraw from where you are to follow Hood. . . . I say, then, go on as you propose." Sherman says in his *Memoirs* that this was the first time that Grant assented to the march to the sea.

There was not the least trace of prejudice or selfishness in Grant's character. He never arrogated to himself the credit for making a single movement which properly belonged to another. Therefore, he says in the *Memoirs*: "The question of who devised the plan of march from Atlanta to Savannah is easily answered; it was clearly Sherman, and to him also belongs the credit of its brilliant execution." And Lincoln, when hearing that Sherman had reached the sea, wrote him on the 26th of December, 1864: "When you were about to leave Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge . . . I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all *yours*."

Sherman began his famous march to the sea on November 14th, with an army of 60,000 men, reaching Savannah, a distance of 250 miles, on December 22nd. It is worth while to add in this connection, that on the 1st of February he began his march northward and



entered Columbia, S. C., on the 17th. General Hardee, in command at Charleston, after destroying much property, evacuated the desolated city, which was soon after entered by the Federal troops, and on the 18th "Old Glory" was again waving over Fort Sumter. Sherman pushed on northward, fighting his way and reached Goldsboro, N. C., March 15th, having marched 425 miles in 50 days over corduroy roads, across rivers, through swamps, capturing important cities and depots of supplies, his army "in superb order and the trains almost as fresh as when they started from Atlanta."

While his lieutenants were thus successful in carrying out their part of the plan, Grant was strengthening his position before Petersburg, and with the approach of spring the time had come for the master-strategist to draw in his lines and concentrate his forces for a final campaign which should crush the rebellion by compelling the evacuation of Richmond and the surrender of Lee's army.

This chapter, which deals with the stirring military events during the autumn of 1864, cannot be closed properly without a reference to Grant and the election of that year. He was always the man of mystery, from the beginning to the end of the war; and he was no less a mystery, or more misunderstood by the politician—and even by Lincoln—than in the presidential battle of 1864.

The President was greatly concerned about the situation in that year, because in the October election



Pennsylvania had been carried by the Democrats; and that state was an important battle ground for the election which was to follow in November. Colonel Alexander K. McClure, who was a leader in the Republican party in that state, was called to Washington, to advise with the President. In his *Lincoln and Men of War-Times*, he gives an account of the interview. He says he found Lincoln's face shadowed with sorrow over the prospect, and in the conversation he asked the Colonel: "Well, what is to be done?" The answer was that "Grant was idle in front of Petersburg," and if 5,000 Pennsylvania soldiers could be furloughed home for two weeks from each army the election could be carried without doubt. When Colonel McClure made this suggestion the President was silent and distressed, and after hesitating for some time he is quoted by the Colonel as making this remarkable reply: "Well McClure, I have no reason to believe that Grant prefers my election to that of McClellan."

If Colonel McClure quoted the President aright, the latter's condition of mind in respect to the General's political attitude is incomprehensible; for there was not the least ground on which Lincoln could base the belief that Grant did not heartily wish the re-election of the Administration. Between Lincoln and Grant had passed letters more expressive of faith and trust in each other than had ever before been written by the Chief Magistrate of the Nation and the Commander-in-chief of the army. Each believed in the other with all his



soul, and mind, and strength ; and that in the campaign of 1864 Lincoln doubted Grant's absolute loyalty to him seems as incredible as would be the statement that Grant depreciated the work he himself had already done in the field, and distrusted the ability of himself and his armies to conquer Lee and save the Union.

Grant was as silent as he was mysterious. When doing his hardest thinking and planning his most elaborate campaign, he said the least about it for public ear. It will be remembered that when he was preparing his first campaign against Lee, he said so little about it to Lincoln that the latter, in a letter to Grant on the 30th of April, used this language: "The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know." And this same reticence was characteristic of Grant in the political campaign, so far as the general public, or even the Administration, was concerned.

There was not the slightest reason for Colonel McClure to say that after that interview with Lincoln, "the name of Grant left a bad taste in my mouth for many years." If the Colonel knew anything of Grant and of the warm friendship existing between him and Lincoln, he certainly should have known that among the things impossible, was the alleged indifference of the Commander-in-chief as to the fate of the President in the election. As early as August 16th, 1864, Grant wrote Representative Washburne: "I have no doubt but the enemy are exceedingly anxious to hold out until after the presidential election. They have many hopes



from its effects. They hope for a counter-revolution." And Horace Porter, in his *Campaigning with Grant*, says the latter "never failed to let it be known (among the troops) that he ardently desired the triumph of the party which was in favor of vigorously prosecuting the war."

Moreover, when Grant had been consulted—not by the Administration—as to the legality and advisability of soldiers voting in the field when their respective states had made provision for their so doing, he took a comprehensive and statesmanlike view of the question, and in a communication to the Secretary of War, dated at City Point on the 27th of September, 1864, he said, among many important things: "They (the volunteer soldiers) are American citizens, and because they have left their home temporarily to sustain the cause of the Union, they should not be deprived of the right to use the ballot," while carrying the bayonet; and he suggested in a very clear manner, how a soldier's right to vote according to his own convictions should be safeguarded. It was generally known at the time that a large majority of the soldiers in the field would vote as they fought, for a prosecution of the war, and both Lincoln and McClure must have known of the existence of Grant's communication to Stanton—a document which removed any doubt as to the General's fidelity to the President. Grant did not vote on election day for the reason that Illinois had failed to enact a law which allowed her soldiers to vote in the field. But on the



morning after the election he telegraphed the Administration: "The victory is worth more to the country than a battle won." Grant afterwards told Colonel McClure, in explaining his political attitude in 1864: "It would have been obviously unbecoming on my part to give public expression against a general whom I had succeeded as Commander-in-chief of the army."\*

When Colonel McClure says in his interview with Lincoln, which has been widely published, that Grant was "idle in front of Petersburg," he little understood what the General was doing to seal the fate of both Petersburg and Richmond. At the very time the Colonel says the General was idle, William Swinton, the historian, then in the field, and who was by no means partial to Grant, said that "he was conducting the most marvellous siege of Richmond—then more wonderful, and up to that time as long, as the siege of Sebastopol; and by months of arduous labor Grant has step by step pushed his lines" closer to the enemy.

If any one wants to obtain a forcible idea of the responsibility placed upon Grant in maintaining the sieges of Petersburg and Richmond, and at the same time keeping in touch with the operations in other fields, he must read the Rebellion Records for only four months—August, September, October, and Novem-

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\* Colonel McClure says "Sheridan furloughed 10,000 Pennsylvania soldiers for a week, and Lincoln carried the state on the home vote of 5,712 majority, to which was added the army vote of 14,363." The total army vote of Pennsylvania was 20,075, of which McClellan received 5,712. McClellan was the worst defeated candidate ever nominated by any one of the great political parties of the country.



ber, 1864. In these volumes, which omit correspondence, are 2,000 pages of telegraphic orders relating to matters in which Grant was mostly concerned, and a large portion of them required his immediate attention. It was not an unusual thing for him to send and receive from fifteen to twenty-five dispatches a day at City Point, nearly all of which pertained to the army in the East, not including the Shenandoah.

“Grant idle in front of Petersburg,” has a queer sound to all who knew the General and were acquainted with the history of the war on the Potomac at that period. The day never dawned from Belmont to Appomattox (except during the short time he was relieved by Halleck, in the spring of 1862) when there was not evolving in his mind some practical plan to defeat his antagonist. Grant was the quiet man of plain manners; and the qualities which brought great plans did not, in his mind, comport with ostentation and superficial accomplishments.



### XXXIII.

#### HOW GRANT REACHED APPOMATTOX.



GRANT'S headquarters remained at City Point (on the James river) during the winter of 1864-65 because of its advantageous position. He could communicate more expeditiously from that place with the armies of the James and of the Potomac; and it also afforded an easy passage to and from Washington should it be necessary for the General and the authorities at the Capital to hold personal interview. Several times Lincoln visited Grant at City Point, and many other persons of note from the North found it convenient to call on the man who was carrying the tremendous responsibility of ending the war. Heroic as was his determined purpose, and marvellous as were his tenacity of will and fearlessness in battle, his visitors at headquarters found him wearing the ornaments of courtesy, gentleness of manner, and quietness of spirit. His plain way of living astonished them. He was easily approached by all



civilian callers, and they found him an entertaining conversationalist, but as to his army plans, he was the silent man. Sometimes he invited a few of his friends whom he knew in Galena, whose kindness to him in the days of his adversity he always remembered with gratitude. To all such acquaintances he was strongly attached. Among those guests was the Rev. John H. Vincent, his former pastor, who happened to reach City Point when Lincoln was there; and introducing him to the President, the General said with a heart full of earnestness: "Mr. President, this is Mr. Vincent, whom I heard preach every Sunday while I lived in Galena." And when at City Point, and while lunching with General and Mrs. Grant, Mr. Vincent says, that he reminded her of her expressed hope when he left Galena in 1861 (quoted in Chapter fourteen) concerning the promotion of her husband. With a pleasant smile and much enthusiasm she replied: "I knew what was in him if only he had a chance with the other fellows." As the Bishop says, the General's success "was never a surprise to the woman who knew him best"; and it may be said of the General himself, that neither by word nor manner did he ever seem surprised at any of his successful campaigns.

Even in the midwinter, when the armies were supposed not to be particularly active, mentally Grant was at rest only during a few sleeping hours at night. His pen seemed never to lag. He kept his mind on all the departments of the enormous army under his command.



If any one is so dull as to see nothing great in Grant beyond his determined purpose, courage, and unconquerable will in battle, let him explain, if he can, why the General's comprehensive mind, clear-sightedness, and success of judgment so quietly manifested, made him the central figure in almost every great achievement of the army. Many striking instances to prove that he was, have been given already; but one which relates to the operation of the army of the James in the winter of 1864-65 when, to many wrongheaded persons, he seemed to be "idle in front of Petersburg," should be included in this chapter.

Fort Fisher, located at the mouth of Cape Fear River, below Wilmington, North Carolina, was occupied by the Confederates. It was of great importance to them, and being an inlet to blockade runners which furnished the enemy supplies, it was strongly fortified. In December, 1864, Grant determined to send an expedition against the fort and capture it. Fort Fisher being in Butler's department, he was entitled to the right of fitting out the land force which was to be supported by a naval squadron commanded by Admiral Porter. Butler entertained the notion that if a steamer loaded with powder could be run close to the shore under the fort and exploded, it would create such a havoc, that, with the co-operation of the army personally commanded by himself, Fisher was sure to fall. The navy department believed that the experiment suggested by Butler would succeed. Grant did not believe



in it for obvious reasons, but he permitted it to be tried. The boat load of powder was exploded on the night of the 24th of December, but Grant says it produced "no more effect on the fort, or anything else on land, than the bursting of a boiler anywhere on the Atlantic Ocean would have done." Butler did not obey the instructions given to him by Grant, and therefore the expedition was a "gross and culpable failure"; the event leading to Butler's retirement.

Grant now resolutely purposed to take Fort Fisher, and to enforce his own plan in taking it. He selected General Terry to command the land forces, and confided to Porter his plan of action, and this was made known only to a few of the trusted officers in the navy department at Washington. Thus, the quiet man worked out the details of the movement in a singularly quiet way. This is no place for particulars. Briefly stated, the army, under Terry, and the naval squadron, under Porter, worked in perfect harmony; and on Sunday, January 25th, 1865, Fort Fisher was captured with 169 cannon and over 2,000 prisoners.

It is well to pause a moment before we follow the fortunes of the great commander in his final campaign and see how the first soldier of his age appeared to his contemporaries, and how he is portrayed by careful and judicious historians. First, as to his personal appearance. Alexander H. Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy, was one of the three Confederate commissioners who entered our lines about Petersburg un-



der army regulations on the last of January, 1865, to confer with Grant at City Point, on the basis for peace negotiations. But Grant having no authority to meet the commissioners for any such purpose, Washington was informed of their presence, and, as a matter of course, the conference held between them and Lincoln and Seward did not give hope to the South. In his volume, *War Between the States*, Mr. Stephens records his surprise at the extreme simplicity of the General-in-chief and the absence of everything that usually pertains to rank and authority. He says:

“He was plainly attired, sitting in a log cabin busily writing on a small table by a kerosene lamp. It was night when we arrived; there was nothing in his appearance or surroundings that indicated his official rank. There were neither guards nor aides about him. . . . The more I became acquainted with him the more I became thoroughly impressed with the very extraordinary combination of rare elements of character which he exhibited.

Dr. Hosmer, in his *Outcome of the Civil War*, after describing the dignified and precise Lee, says:

“Grant, on the other hand, always homely and unimpressive, discredited by his ante-bellum record, informal to the point of negligence about all details of dress and manner, yet withal simple, intrepid, honest, with an eye single to the great purpose which he had adopted—here is a character that can be embraced; he has roughness upon which the human heart can take hold—worth most substantial, but with a foil of limitation that makes him a man among men.”

And, concerning Grant's work up to the close of 1864, Dr. Hosmer says:

“In Grant's record, the masterpiece is undoubtedly the capture of Vicksburg. And yet, where shall we parallel the relentless force of will with which, in 1864, he, a man of gentle and



humane nature, smote with his flesh and blood hammer, believing it to be the only way to success, and even hardened his heart toward Andersonville, determined to secure by whatever sacrifice the salvation of his country?"

Another paragraph from Dr. Hosmer is well worth quoting because it relates to the tremendous strain to which Grant had been subjected for eighteen months:

"From the battle of Chattanooga, in October, 1863, to the spring of 1865, General Grant underwent severe trials. His labors were incessant, his responsibilities enormous, his capacity exercised to its fullest. Nevertheless, he was disappointed where he tried hardest; for after a year's steady campaigning, Richmond and the Army of Northern Virginia were still defiant. Though Meade continued to command the Army of the Potomac, Grant was always at his side, the real leader; and it was he whom the people judged for whatever that army did or failed to do. Meantime, Sherman, Sheridan, and Thomas reached high distinction. Their success, no doubt, was in part due to Grant, who put those generals in place, had a hand in all their planning, if he was not absolutely the director of their movements; and kept Lee from reinforcing their opponents; but to the popular eye this was not quite apparent. Grant's tenacity, indeed, through protracted disaster, excited wonder. Really, his heroic quality was never more manifest than in that long year's endurance of hope deferred; but this is plainer in the retrospect than it was at the moment."

Now to return to the armies before Petersburg.

In February, Sheridan had been ordered as soon as he could move to make a raid to the west of Richmond to destroy canals and railroads in every direction. By the end of March, only two of the main lines of communication centering in Richmond and Petersburg were under Confederate control. Grant's plan was to extend his lines to the south and west so as to secure



control of these, and when Sheridan should join him he proposed to make a final attempt to cut all Lee's communication with the outside world and thus seal the fate of the army of Northern Virginia. His chief fear was that Lee would escape and join Johnston's army in North Carolina.

On the night of March 25th, Lee sent General J. B. Gordon to make an attack upon Fort Steadman, near the center of the Federal line south of Petersburg. The attack was at first successful and the enemy gained possession of the works, but as day dawned, the Federals rallied, recaptured the fort, and took the entire attacking party of 4,000 prisoners.

Sheridan had now arrived, Sherman came up from Goldsboro, President Lincoln joined them at City Point March 27th, and these four great chiefs, full of hope and with complete confidence in one another, talked over their plans for the coming campaign.

Nicolay and Hay, in their masterly work on the *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, after speaking of the conference between the President and the generals at City Point, say:

"Sherman went back to Goldsboro and Grant began pushing his army to the left with even more than his usual iron energy. It was a great army; it was the result of all the power and wisdom of the Government, all the devotion of the people, all the intelligence and teachableness of the soldiers themselves, and all the ability and character which the experience of mighty war had developed in the officers. Few nations have produced better corps commanders than Sheridan, Warren, Humphreys, Ord, Wright, and Parke, taking their names as they come in the vast



sweep of the Union lines from Dinwiddie Court House to the James in the last days of March. North of the James was Weitzel, vigilant and capable. Between Grant and the Army of the Potomac was Meade, the incarnation of industry, zeal, and talent; and in command of all was Grant, then in his best days, the most extraordinary military temperament this country has ever seen. When unfriendly criticism has exhausted itself, the fact remains, not to be explained away by any reasoning, subtle or gross, that in this tremendous war he accomplished more with the means given him than any other two on either side. The means given him were enormous, the support of the Government was intelligent and untiring; but others had received the same means and the same support—and he alone captured three armies. The popular instinct which hails him as our greatest general is correct; and the dilettante critics who write ingenious arguments to prove that one or another of his subordinates or his adversaries was his superior will please for a time their diminishing coteries, and then pass into silence without damaging his robust fame.”

Hardly any incident more clearly illustrates Grant's mysterious character than his plan of organizing the spring campaign of 1865. Sheridan, the intrepid fighter of the Shenandoah, and his army, had been transferred by Grant from the Valley to the Army of the Potomac. About the time the conference was held at City Point at which Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman were present, there was much restlessness in the North because of the seemingly slow movement of the Army of the Potomac. It was a rainy season, and for some days neither the artillery nor the cavalry could make successful movements. But during this apparent delay Grant was at his best. He was preparing plans for a supreme movement against the enemy. To some of his instruc-



tions to the army—carefully drawn by himself—Rawlins, his chief-of-staff, who had been at the General's side in every great campaign, took exceptions expressed in both vigorous speech and action. But the charm of Grant's temper did not desert him, and after Rawlins had given vent to his feelings concerning a portion of the instructions to the army, the General, in a state of the utmost tranquility, and with a face more impassive than usual, said: "Well, Rawlins, I think you had better take command." This was like spiking the enemy's guns.

When Sheridan reached City Point and read the letter of instructions, he also became vehement in his opposition to that portion which seemed to foreshadow his joining Sherman for the purpose of crushing Johnston's army. But Grant loved Rawlins and Sheridan and could not wrangle with them. He was never provoked to excitement, and whatever may have been his feelings on an occasion of this kind, he did not show the slightest ill temper. He was planning a movement of the army which contemplated a great victory for Sheridan, and not many days hence would compel the evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of Lee.

Grant had a twofold purpose in giving such instructions to Sheridan which he could not understand until it was clearly and quietly explained to him by the Commander-in-chief. Grant had determined to bring



the war to an end then and there, and making this purpose known to Sheridan, the face of the Shenandoah hero brightened up, and Grant says, "slapping his hand on his leg he exclaimed, 'I am glad to hear it, and we can do it'."



## XXXIV.

### GRANT AND LEE SHAKE HANDS.



THE onward movement of Grant's army in accordance with his instructions of the 24th of March, supplemented by those of the 28th, began on the 29th. It was the beginning of the end. Sheridan was to attack the Confederate right. Lee hurried reinforcements to the threatened point and a hot struggle took place at Five Forks on April 1st, in which Sheridan was completely successful, putting the enemy to flight and capturing 6,000 prisoners. As soon as Grant heard that Sheridan was in possession of Five Forks he ordered a general attack upon the defences of Petersburg. There was no hesitation and no blunder this time. Each division of the army did its work effectively. One position after another was taken, so that before noon, April 2nd, Grant rode his horse over the parapet of the outer fortifications, and at 4:40 p. m. sent word to



City Point where the President was waiting: "We are now up and have a continuous line of troops, and in a few hours will be entrenched from the Appomattox below Petersburg to the river above. . . . The whole captures since the army started out gunning will amount to not less than 12,000 men, and probably 50 pieces of artillery. . . . I think the President might come out and pay us a visit to-morrow."

Grant ordered a bombardment of Petersburg to begin at 5 o'clock next morning, to be followed by an assault at 6, but before the order could be carried out, the Confederate army had evacuated the city. At 11 o'clock, April 2nd, Lee had telegraphed to Richmond: "I see no prospect of doing more than hold our position until night. I am not certain that I can do that." It was Sunday, and Jefferson Davis was in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, of which he was a member, when the dispatch was taken to him. He immediately left the church and gave orders for the evacuation of Richmond. The city was in panic, and public buildings, warehouses, stores, private residences, were blown up or set on fire. The convicts from the state prison escaped and added new terror to the pandemonium that reigned until a Federal force under Weitzel appeared at 7 o'clock in the morning, April 3rd, and restored order. Never was the appearance of an enemy more welcome than were the hated "Yanks" to the terror stricken citizens of Richmond.

The plans and combinations of Grant contemplated



precisely the event that had occurred, the defeat of Lee, and his retreat in haste from Petersburg and Richmond. It was not meant that in any contingency he should be permitted to escape. The fatal hour had come to the Commander of the Confederate army. Grant's attack along his whole line the day after Five Forks was so complete that Lee said: "I had to stretch my lines until they broke."

When General Grant found that Lee had evacuated Petersburg, he, with General Meade, entered the town in time to see the flying Confederates moving through some of the streets and along the river bottom. He says that he did not have the artillery brought up because he expected to push on immediately in pursuit, and adds: "I had not the heart to turn the artillery upon such a mass of defeated and fleeing men, and I hope to capture them soon."

While everything had gone according to the plans that Grant had made when he first ordered Sheridan to advance, he had not told Mr. Lincoln for fear that the plan might miscarry and another disappointment be added to the many the long-suffering President had known for the past three years, but after the capture of Petersburg he telegraphed Mr. Lincoln to ride out and see him there. All the troops had started in pursuit of the enemy and not a person or an animal could be seen on the streets. Grant and his staff awaited the arrival of the President on the piazza of a deserted house. The first thing Mr. Lincoln said after congratulations and



thanks was: "Do you know, General, that I have had a sort of sneaking idea for some days that you intended to do something like this?" The President soon after returned to City Point, and Grant rode off to join the pursuing army.

The army of Northern Virginia was fleeing for its life. Lee's plan was to hurry south and unite with Johnston and strike Sherman, but his rations had failed, and he found that Grant had cut the railway south of him. This was next to the last crushing blow to Lee. Grant and his generals, determined to end the war there, pushed on with the greatest vigor and fell upon the rear and flanks of the enemy, who from time to time turned to strike his pursuers. At Sailor's Creek a sharp conflict took place on the 6th, resulting in the defeat of the Confederates with a loss of 1,700 prisoners and a large amount of equipment. Sheridan, seeing the possibilities of ultimate success, ended his report by saying: "If the thing is pressed, I think Lee will surrender." Grant sent the dispatch to Lincoln, who instantly replied: "Let the thing be pressed." The pursuit continued during the 7th when it became apparent that the Confederate army was going to pieces. Grant became convinced that Lee would be willing to consider a proposal to surrender. Sitting at his headquarters on the piazza of a village tavern at Farmville, fifteen miles a little southeast of Appomattox Court House, while his soldiers marched by with bands playing and with every possible demonstration of joy, the



mysterious, silent man was thinking, not how he could win further honors to himself, but how he could most quickly end this struggle and how he could bring about that end with least humiliation to his fallen foe.

The Confederate forces had been reduced to such a "ragged, weary, starved remnant," that on Friday, April 7th, Lee's corps commanders suggested to him that the time had come for negotiations for peace. And on the evening of the same day while at Farmville, Grant sent to Lee the following note under a flag of truce:

"The results of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia."

This was answered within one hour, and although his forces were crushed to pieces and his chance of success was gone forever, Lee said that he did not entertain the opinion expressed by Grant regarding the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, but was willing to ask for terms of surrender. Grant, of course, was not satisfied with the tone of Lee's reply, and on the following morning, while yet at Farmville, he sent him a second note, in which he expressly stated that there was but one basis upon which peace could be restored—a complete surrender of the Confederate forces; and Grant also



added that he would meet Lee at any point agreeable to him, for the purpose of arranging terms of surrender. This note was received by Lee late in the afternoon on Saturday, the 8th, and in his answer thereto, written after sundown, he insisted that while he could not meet Grant with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia, he would meet him at 10 o'clock Sunday morning on the old stage road to Richmond between the picket lines of the two armies to consider the question of peace so far as it affected the Confederate States forces under his command.

General Alexander, in his *Memoirs of a Confederate*, says Lee had but recently been appointed commander-in-chief of all the Confederate armies, and that he delayed the surrender of his own army in order that the negotiation might include that of all the Confederates under his command.

But before proceeding further regarding the famous correspondence between the two commanders, it will be interesting to note the attitude of Lee and his generals towards the proposition to surrender. Immediately prior to a conference of Lee's corps commanders at which they expressed the opinion that the time had come when their chief should have a personal interview with Grant, General Pendleton, Lee's chief of artillery, had a consultation with the General on the subject of surrender. A part of what the Confederate chief said to Pendleton is told in Dr. J. William Jones'



*Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee.* Lee, replying to one of Pendleton's questions said:

"We have yet too many bold men to think of laying down our arms. The enemy do not fight with spirit, while our boys still do. Besides, if I were to say a word to the Federal commander he would regard it as such a confession of weakness as to make it the occasion of demanding unconditional surrender—a proposal to which I will never listen. I have resolved to die first; and if it comes to that we should force through or all fall in our places."

While it may seem that Lee's courage had not failed him, he was not insensible of the fact that his "game was desperate beyond redemption." Two words: "unconditional surrender," weighed heavily upon his mind. He hardly thought it possible that the "glorious old Army of Northern Virginia," should suffer the fate of the Confederate forces at Donelson and Vicksburg. He seemed perplexed beyond measure as to what course to pursue; and yet, when General E. P. Alexander said to him: "We have only the choice of two courses, either to surrender, or take to the woods and bushes," the latter choice signifying bushwhacking, Lee, as a Christian man, said he could not agree to disperse the army in this way; General Alexander quotes him as saying: "As for myself, you young fellows might go to bushwhacking, but the only dignified course for me would be to go to Grant and surrender myself and take the consequences of my acts."

Lee's corps commanders had agreed on the 8th that they would try to cut their way through to Appomattox Station early on Sunday morning the 9th, and if unsuc-



cessful they should call a halt, notify Lee, who would then raise a flag of truce with a view to surrendering. The attempt was made to break through the Federal lines, but Grant's forces stood like a wall of adamant before the jaded Confederate lines, and a sullen gloom settled upon the prospects of the enemy. What happened early on Sunday morning I give in the language of Colonel Charles S. Venable of Lee's staff:

"At 3 o'clock on the morning of that fatal day Lee rode forward, still hoping that we might break through the countless hordes of the enemy. . . . Halting a short distance in the rear of our vanguard, he sent me to Gordon to ask him if he could break through the enemy. Gordon's reply to the message was this: 'Tell General Lee I have fought my corps to a frazzle, and I fear I can do nothing unless I am heavily supported by Longstreet's corps.' When Lee heard this message he said: 'There is nothing left me but to go and see Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths.' . . . Said one: 'O General, what will history say of the surrender of the army in the field?' He replied: 'Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; . . . but that is not the question, Colonel; the question is: is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all the responsibility.'"

The end had come. Any further struggle on the part of Lee to escape surrender would be not only hopeless but almost criminal. Longstreet, who had known



Grant in the old army, tried to remove from Lee's mind, as much as possible the dread of meeting Grant, by assuring him that the former would not exact unreasonable terms. Terrible as was Grant in battle, in dealing with a fallen foe his mercy was as tender as that taught in the gospel of the Son of Man. Little did Lee seem to think that in meeting his antagonist face to face, the victor's innate kindness, sympathy, and love of peace would give the vanquished the most magnanimous terms ever offered in the history of the world.

Lee's note of the 8th to Grant, saying that he would meet him on the stage road between the two picket lines, was received by Grant about midnight on Saturday, at Meade's headquarters at Curdsville, eight miles north of Farmville and fifteen miles east of Appomattox Court House.

On Saturday afternoon Grant was attacked by a violent sick headache. His suffering was greater than at any time since he was thrown from his horse near New Orleans, shortly after the siege of Vicksburg. The last week of the campaign against Lee had been especially severe. He was making a supreme effort to capture the Confederate army. This occasioned intense mental and physical strain and the loss of sleep. During the night of Saturday, hot baths, mustard plasters, and other remedies were employed to allay the pain and produce sleep, but no good results came from them. This was



the General's condition when Lee's note reached him at midnight. After reading it, General Horace Porter makes Grant say: "It looks as if Lee still means to fight; I will reply in the morning."

In answering Lee's note Grant reminded him that he had no authority to treat for peace on any political basis, that the proposed meeting at 10 o'clock would lead to no good, and that peace could only be restored by the South laying down their arms.

But this note was not received by Lee at 8:30 A. M., and fully expecting that Grant would accede to the proposal to meet between the two picket lines at 10 o'clock, the Confederate Commander started out to meet him. General Alexander says Lee wore a full suit of new uniform, with sword and sash, and an embroidered belt, boots, and gold spurs. Doubtless Lee supposed that the commander of all the armies of the Union, who was the victor in so many important battles, would be hardly less brilliantly uniformed for such an occasion than himself. But a courier was sent after Lee with a note from Grant, which proved to be the one written early that morning, declining an interview at 10 o'clock to discuss the subject of peace.

Of course Lee was disappointed. The battles of Five Forks and Sailor's Creek were a sad reminder that his army was suffering a severe mortal dwindling, and being hemmed in on all sides, surrender was the only alternative. He therefore immediately sent Grant the following note:



"I received your note of this morning on the picket line whither I had come to meet you, and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now request an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose."

Grant received this note at a point about eight miles east of Appomattox Court House. His headache, which had been continuous and extremely painful, instantly ceased, he says, when he saw the contents of Lee's note; and immediately he wrote the following reply:

"April 9, 1865.

*"General R. E. Lee, Commanding C. S. Armies.*

"Your note of this date is but this moment (11:50 A. M.) received, in consequence of my having passed from the Richmond and Lynchburg road to the Farmville and Lynchburg road. I am at this writing about four miles west of Walker's church and will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you. Notice sent to me on this road where you wish the interview to take place will meet me.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-General.*"

This note was written three or four miles southeast of Appomattox, and was delivered to Lee by Colonel Babcock of Grant's staff, who was authorized to make necessary arrangements for the meeting of the two commanders. General Alexander says in his *Memoirs of a Confederate*, that after reading Grant's note Lee said he would ride forward to meet Grant, but he was apprehensive lest hostilities might begin in the rear on the termination of Meade's truce of one hour (which had been granted late in the forenoon). Colonel Babcock accordingly wrote to Meade to maintain the truce until orders from Grant could be received. To expedite mat-



ters the note was taken through the Confederate lines by Colonel Forsyth of Sheridan's staff, accompanied by Colonel Taylor, Lee's adjutant.

It was not strange that Lee feared hostilities might break out at this juncture of the negotiations. The general temper of both armies was peculiar. In the Confederate forces there were those who insisted on fighting to the last ditch. General Anderson says that the last thing Longstreet said to Lee as Grant's messenger was approaching, was: "General, unless he offers us honorable terms, come back and let us fight it out." Sheridan and his men, who were not quite satisfied with their great achievements in the Shenandoah and at Five Forks and Sailor's Creek, professed to believe that Lee's last note to Grant was only a ruse to enable the Confederates to escape and join Johnston, and he said that if Grant would let them go in they would whip the rebels where they were in five minutes. But Grant's cool judgment prevailed. He had absolute faith in Lee's sincerity in asking for terms, and when Sheridan became impressed with this fact he realized that his army had fought its last battle and won its last victory.

Grant and his staff followed Colonel Babcock as early as possible, and on reaching Appomattox the General was directed to the house of Major Wilmer McLean, where he found Lee and Colonel Marshall, his military secretary. When the meeting, which was quite cordial, took place between the two commanders,



Grant's full staff, and Sheridan and Ord were present, but the only officer accompanying Lee was Colonel Marshall.\*

In his *Life and Letters of Lee*, Dr. Jones states that he had the privilege once, in Lexington, Virginia, of hearing the General give his own account of the surrender, which he says does not differ on any material point from that given by Grant in the *Memoirs*. From the moment these two great leaders in war met, Grant's whole object seemed to be "to mitigate as far as lay in his power the bitterness of defeat and to soothe as far as he could the lacerated susceptibilities of Lee." And Dr. Bruce, in his *Life of Lee*, says: "As man and patriot, Grant, like Lee, was fully equal to all the highest demands upon character in that searching hour. . . . No one understood more thoroughly than he the valor, fortitude, and constancy of the Army of Northern Virginia; and to have that army at his mercy at last might well have raised undisguised exultation in his mind, and also called up irrepressible visions of the most dazzling political honors. If such natural and justifiable thoughts occurred to him, there is no proof of the fact. 'I felt like anything,' he himself said, 'rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long

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\* The McLean house, though destined to immortality in history, met a ignominious end in 1893. Its owners projected a scheme of moving it to Washington, and to that end it was pulled down, each brick and timber being carefully numbered; but the financial panic of that year so impoverished the projectors that they abandoned the plan, and the remains of the building now lie upon the ground in neglect and decay.—*Munsey Magazine*, 1908.



and valiantly, and suffered so much for their cause,' generous hearted words which will be cherished by all his reunited countrymen to the remotest generations. Throughout those memorable scenes he remained, what he had always been—quiet, modest, unpretending, and magnanimous." Surely Lee must have found it infinitely easier to meet his comrade of the old army and talk with him about the terms of surrender than "to die a thousand deaths."

Grant says that his own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of Lee's letter of Sunday morning, were sad and depressed at the scene in the McLean house; and after describing Lee's full uniform, which was entirely new, he adds: "In my rough traveling suit (with no sword) the uniform of a private with the straps of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of faultless form.

"We soon fell into a conversation about old army times. He remarked that he remembered me very well in the old army; and I told him that as matter of course I remembered him perfectly, but from the difference in our rank and years (there being about sixteen years difference in our ages), I had thought it very likely that I had not attracted his attention sufficiently to be remembered by him after such a long interval. Our conversation grew so pleasant that I almost forgot the subject of our meeting." This reminiscent mood into which the Generals had quickly drifted after their greet-



ing, which was a happy prelude to the consideration of the great question of the hour, was closed temporarily only when Lee referred to the real purport of the interview, and asked Grant for the terms he proposed to give his army. Grant, with a firm voice, yet quiet and full of kindness, peculiar to him, replied that he meant that Lee's army should lay down their arms, not to take them up again during the continuance of the war unless duly exchanged; and to this Lee assented.

Grant was great and mysterious on many occasions during the war, but never more so than in the presence of his chief antagonist at Appomattox. He understood that he had no right to make political terms with Lee, but as to the surrender on a military basis, he did not consult the government at Washington as to what he should do. He took upon himself the full responsibility of according the most lenient treatment ever before given to a vanquished foe. In his mental vision he saw that this was the quickest way to finish the war in all parts of the South, and in the magnanimity of his soul he gave Lee the following terms:

"April 9, 1865.

"GENERAL: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst. I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged; and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands. . . . The arms, artillery, and



public property to be packed and stacked, and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses, or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by the United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut.-Gen.*"

After reading the terms Lee expressed himself well pleased with them, and he requested Colonel Marshall to write a note of acceptance. The note began with the words, "I have the honor," etc., but the Confederate Commander, despite Grant's generosity which had never before been equalled in the history of the war, could not soften his feelings quite enough to permit the word "honor" to appear on the record, and when the acceptance was amended and handed to Grant it was in this form: ,

"GENERAL: I have received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulation into effect.

R. E. LEE, *General.*"

Grant could not be otherwise than kind to the enemy in such an hour as that. Before parting at Appomattox, which was about four o'clock, Sunday afternoon, Lee called Grant's attention to the fact that his army had been subsisting on parched corn for several days, and he asked the General if he could furnish them with some 25,000 rations. Grant promptly said Yes, and as terms of surrender "transcended in liberality anything that Lee could have fairly expected," so his



generosity towards the famished enemy was greater than Lee could possibly have asked. Grant authorized Lee to send his own commissary and quartermaster to Appomattox station, two or three miles away, and call for all the rations his army needed. Grant did not pose as a conquerer. He was too modest and considerate to manifest pride over his great victory. Neither would he permit his army to become jubilant when the surrender was concluded. The same magnanimity which he showed Pemberton at Vicksburg was shown Lee at Appomattox—the ordering that no cheering or firing of salutes be allowed; and this simple form of surrender, says Dr. Jones in his book, won the highest admiration of Confederate soldiers and people.

The country did not know what great things were transpiring at Appomattox on the afternoon of Palm Sunday, until Grant sent from his headquarters at 4:30 o'clock on that day the following dispatch to the Secretary of War at Washington:

“General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia this afternoon on terms proposed by myself.”

Thus, by a dramatic fitness, the last great battle of the war, and the final surrender of the enemy, took place upon the “sacred soil of the state which drank the blood of the patriotic heroes of July, 1861.”

The reader need not be told of the joy which filled the Nation's heart when this message was flashed from Washington to all parts of the land. It occasioned the most widespread praise, rejoicing, and thanks-



giving any country ever experienced. No more of Americans slaying Americans in battle. The Union was saved. But the little man, in the dress of a private soldier, who commanded the armies which brought about this glorious consummation, was not among those who joined in the demonstrations of joy. When he reached his camp that night he was none other than the real Grant—modest, quiet, regardless of the greatness of the occasion. General Horace Porter, who was with him at the time, says Grant had little to say about the surrender, and that it was not until after supper that he freely expressed his belief that the rest of the Confederate commanders would soon follow Lee's example.

The day following the surrender, Grant and Lee, mounted on horses, had an interview between the lines at which matters of mutual interest were discussed. General Anderson says that during the meeting of the two generals on the 10th, Grant suggested to Lee that he might serve the course of peace by a visit to President Davis and General Johnston who were then in North Carolina, but Lee declined to go on such a mission, as the surrender had made him a private citizen and he did not wish to interfere with the movements of either Davis or Johnston.

When Lee surrendered there were 28,356 officers and men paroled. These were all that were left of the Army of Northern Virginia. During the eleven days previous to the historic Palm Sunday, in which the



battles of Five Forks and Sailor's Creek were fought, 19,132 Confederates were captured who were not included in the number paroled at Appomattox; and in estimating the strength of Lee's army when Grant began his final movement against him, there must be added the enemy's losses during those eleven days, in killed, wounded, and missing, which would make Lee's fighting force on the last of March, 1865, considerably over 50,000; besides, the number of cannon taken in battle and at Appomattox and in the desperate battles a few days previous, was 689. Grant's fighting force against Lee was 125,000.

These facts, taken from the official records, show that Lee's army was something more than a mere remnant two weeks prior to the surrender; and they are reproduced by Grant in the *Memoirs* to show that northern writers, as well as southern, have fallen into the error of magnifying the number of Union troops engaged in all important battles and belittling the strength of the Confederate forces.



## XXXV.

### THE LAST BATTLE—THE GRAND REVIEW.



THE arrangements for paroling the Army of Northern Virginia were completed when Grant appointed Generals Gibbon, Merrit, and Griffin to carry into effect the terms agreed to on Sunday, and Lee had designated Generals Longstreet, Gordon, and Pendleton to assist in the work. Believing that the war had practically ended, Grant departed for Washington on Tuesday the 11th of April, to stop the enormous expense of furnishing supplies for an army of nearly one million strong, 600,000 of which were in the field ready for any movement the Commander-in-chief might deem necessary. During Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of that week, the General was busily engaged in issuing all necessary orders and instructions to meet this new condition of affairs. The work having been finished in the afternoon of the 14th, Grant made arrangements to start from Washington that night with Mrs. Grant to visit



their children at Burlington, New Jersey, and while preparing for this journey he was invited by the President to accompany him and Mrs. Lincoln to Ford's theatre in the evening; but the General's pre-arranged plan to leave the city made it impossible for him to accept the invitation.

When Grant reached Philadelphia, near midnight, he found an excited multitude awaiting him, and also dispatches informing him of the assassination of the President. The import of the telegrams was that the presence in Washington of the Commander-in-chief of the National forces would allay serious apprehensions. As quickly as possible Grant returned by a special train to the Capital, to find the city overwhelmed with grief. As quickly as the assassin's shot could be fired the Nation's noon of joy was merged in the midnight of sorrow.

With the surrender at Appomattox there was not a glimmer of hope for any other portion of the Confederate army to escape the fate of the Army of Northern Virginia. General Joseph E. Johnston, in North Carolina, had the strongest force in the field, but on the 18th of April, seeing that the Confederacy was collapsing, he entered into an agreement with Sherman, who was pressing him to the death, to make a conditional surrender under truce which was to remain in force until the agreement could be sent to Washington for approval. As is well known, Sherman added to the terms Grant had given Lee some matters of a political



character. It was quite natural that Sherman should make such conditional terms with Johnston, and Grant says that he no doubt thought he was but carrying out the wishes of President Lincoln—intimating, it seems, that this thought was based on a conversation with Lincoln at the conference held at Hampton Roads on the 28th of March. But there were stronger reasons than this which led Sherman to include a little political matter in the agreement with Johnston, subject, of course, to the approval of the Administration. The order of the President of the 3rd of March instructing Grant to make no political terms with Lee had not been sent to Sherman by Stanton, and the latter never communicated with him in advance the purpose of the Administration to limit negotiations with the enemy to purely military matters. In addition to this, Sherman justifies himself in making those conditional terms with Johnston by stating that when Stanton was at Savannah, after the famous march to the sea had split the Confederacy in twain, the Secretary authorized him to control all matters civil and military.

The agreement was repudiated by the Administration, and before Sherman could be informed of this action Stanton caused the document, together with the seal of condemnation, to be made public, which was an unwarranted insult to Sherman; and Grant says that his own feelings were as much excited by this outrage as Sherman's. It was not a document to be publicly condemned in a vituperative spirit, as was done by



Stanton, but to be privately considered by President Johnson and his cabinet, and if annulled, to be returned to Sherman for correction.

We get from this incident another illustration of the beautiful friendship between Grant and Sherman, one which shows the sublime unselfishness of the Commander-in-chief. On April 21st, Grant was directed by Stanton to proceed immediately to Sherman's headquarters at Raleigh, North Carolina, and take charge of the operations against the enemy, or in other words, to supersede his friend Sherman. The General departed for the South at once, but with a definite purpose to pay no heed to Stanton's order to direct further movements against Johnston. True friend that he was to Sherman, Grant did not propose to humiliate him by seeming to be officious in commanding what should be done with Johnston, neither would he take from him the honor of receiving the surrender of the enemy. Quietly he entered Raleigh, but few of the officers of the army knowing that he was present.

Privately conferring with Sherman, Grant showed him the terms with Lee, and told him to inform Johnston that the conditional agreement of the 18th had been revoked by the President and the Secretary of War, and that he had full authority to offer him the same terms on which Lee surrendered to Grant. This was as far as Grant went in obeying Stanton's instructions to take charge of the operations against the enemy. When Sherman told Johnston that the agreement of the 18th



had been repudiated at Washington, and that he must follow Lee's example in surrendering, Johnston yielded to the inevitable, and on the 26th of April a full surrender was made. Not willing to take to himself credit for what had been done, Grant telegraphed the Government, "Johnston has surrendered to Sherman"; and as quietly as he entered Raleigh, Grant departed from it and returned to Washington. The number of Confederates laying down their arms in Johnston's command was 89,270.\*

After the surrender of Johnston the disintegration of the Confederacy was rapid. Within a few days all forts and garrisons fell. On the 4th of May, General Dick Taylor, son of General Zachary Taylor, of Mexican War fame, and afterwards President, surrendered all his command east of the Mississippi, and General James H. Wilson made a cavalry raid through Florida and Georgia which resulted in the capture of Jefferson Davis on the 11th of May at Irwinsville. General E. Kirby Smith, commanding the trans-Mississippi department, surrendered to General Canby on the 26th of May.

The work of the Grand Army of the Republic was accomplished. The Union was no longer threatened by an armed foe. But the armies of the East and of the Middle West could not stack their arms and rejoin the

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\*At the funeral of General Sherman (he died in New York, February 14th, 1891) the Confederate commander, Joseph E. Johnston, was one of the pall-bearers.



great body of citizens without making one more march which will ever be memorable in the history of the volunteers in the Civil War. It was ordered by the Adjutant General of the army, that the Army of the Potomac, and so much of the army of Sherman as was stationed within marching distance of Washington, should pass in review before the President and General Grant on the 23rd and 24th of May. One week had been devoted by the officials in Washington to preparing for the event. The weather behaved remarkably well. On a platform in front of the White House were the President, Grant, members of the cabinet, Judges of the Supreme Court, and many prominent generals and admirals of the army and navy.

Tuesday, with its golden sun, inaugurated the grandest military pageant ever witnessed on this American continent. The day was given to the Army of the Potomac headed by General Meade. This Army had fought more hard battles, suffered greater losses, and made more successful flank movements in the short space of six weeks (from May 4th to June 18th, 1864) than any army of which we have record. It was a formidable host—100,000 strong. It started from “the shadow of the dome of the capitol and filled that wide thoroughfare (Pennsylvania avenue) to Georgetown, moving with the easy yet rapid pace of well trained veterans.”

Wednesday, the 24th, was a great day for Sherman's army which had made the victorious march from



Atlanta to the Sea—famous in song and story. The General rode at the head of the column composed of 65,000 rugged and orderly soldiers. The General and his troops, and the music, *Marching Through Georgia*, which was inseparable from the occasion, “were received by the dense multitude that thronged the avenue with a deafening and prolonged tumult of rapturous plaudits.”

There were several regiments from the West in Meade’s army, and the East contributed the contingent which Howard and Hooker took to Chattanooga and afterward remained in the Middle West, but in the main Sherman’s troops were Western men, therefore, say Nicolay and Hay, “in the review, they were scanned with keen and hospitable interest by the vast crowd of spectators who were mainly from the East. There was little to choose between the two armies; a trifle more of neatness and discipline, perhaps, among the veterans of Meade, a slight preponderance in physique and in swinging vigor of march among the Westerners; but the trivial differences were lost in the immense and evident likeness, as of brothers in one family. There was a touch of the grotesque in the march of Sherman’s legions which was absent from the well-ordered corps of Meade.

“As a mere spectacle, this march of the mightiest host the continent has ever seen gathered together was grand and imposing, but it was not as a spectacle alone that it affected the beholder most deeply. It was not



a mere holiday parade; it was an army of citizens on their way home after a long and terrible war. And the thoughtful diplomatists who looked on the scene from the reviewing stand could not help seeing that there was a conservative force in an intelligent democracy which the world had never before known."

Thus ended on Wednesday a peaceful demonstration of volunteer soldiers such as no other land ever saw, and as this land will never see again. The great armies which had saved the Union passed up Pennsylvania Avenue out of mortal sight and into everlasting history. Henceforth and forever the names of the armies of the Potomac and of the Middle West are names to conjure with. The irresistible force of this mighty host, which had been wielded in battle for four long years, was to melt away and vanish in a day, but their great deeds were recorded and they left behind results far greater than themselves—imperishable achievements in the world's constant contest for human rights.

Horace Greeley, in complimenting the soldiers in this Grand Review and their comrades in other departments of the great battle field, closes his *American Conflict* with this sentence: "Rapidly, as well as peacefully and joyously, were the mightiest hosts ever called to the field by a republic restored to the tranquil paths of industry and thrift, melting back by regiments into quiet citizenship, with nothing to distinguish them from others, but the proud consciousness of having served and saved their country."



## XXXVI.

### GRANT AS A COMMANDER.



GRANT as a commander will ever be the theme of a story of peculiar interest. As a campaigner, and a winner of battles, history does not furnish his superior, and but few, if any, who are his equal. From the day he commanded the 21st Illinois Infantry to the event at Appomattox, he was successful in every great military operation under his immediate direction. He never lost a battle when he fought the enemy in the open; and when he began a movement against his antagonist, as in the Virginia campaign, though twice temporarily checked because of the enemy's entrenchments, Grant did not swerve from his main purpose, and in the end he was successful. He stands pre-eminent among all the generals who served in the Civil War in the completeness of his final results. He owed nothing to accident; and both in the West and the East, he accomplished the most arduous undertakings.



If anyone is so dull or prejudiced that he sees nothing great in Grant beyond his marvellous tenacity of will, let him explain, if he can, how it came to pass that this quality was always exerted in conspicuous energy, precisely at the point on which everything in his whole sphere of operations hinged. He never displayed great qualities on small occasions; he never put forth herculean efforts to accomplish objects not of the first magnitude.

Many military critics have wondered where Grant got his genius. It had never been displayed on any occasion previous to the Civil War. The late George S. Boutwell, United States Senator from Massachusetts, says Grant's military genius was simply a part of his nature; God gave it to him; and almost by intuition he knew what should be done in an emergency. "Grant could go on the field and post a line of battle in twenty minutes, while another military man who had been a hard student, might take a day or two to do the same thing." Grant's military genius was remarkably displayed in the Vicksburg campaign, and at Chattanooga; and his capability of grasping with success the whole situation at a glance, was fully recognized when he was given command of all the armies of the Union.

When the Army of the Tennessee held its annual meeting in Chicago in November, 1879, Colonel William F. Vilas, a Democrat of the old school, afterwards



a member of President Cleveland's cabinet and United States Senator from Wisconsin, said, in his great oration on Grant:

"How like a weapon in a giant's hand, did he wield the vast aggregations of soldiery, whose immensity oppressed so many minds! How every soldier came to feel his participation a direct contribution to the general success! And when, at length, his merit won the government of the entire military power of the North, how perfect became, without noise or friction, the coöperation of every army, of every strength throughout the wide territory of the war, toward the common end. . . . Then how rapidly crumbled on every side the crushed revolt! Where shall we find in past records the tale of such a struggle, so enormous in extent, so nearly matched at the outset, so desperately contested, so effectively decided! Through what a course of uninterrupted victories did he proceed from the earliest engagements to a complete dominion of the vast catastrophe!"

James G. Blaine was a candid critic, and when asked to deliver an address on Grant at Portland, Me. August 8th, 1885, speaking of his genius as a commander, he said:

"Grant's military supremacy was honestly earned, without factious praise and without extraneous help. He had no influence to urge his promotion except such as was attracted by his own achievements. He had no potential friends except those whom his victories won to



his support. He exhibited extraordinary qualities in the field. Bravery among American officers is a rule which has, happily, had few exceptions; but as an eminent general said, 'Grant possessed a quality above bravery. He had an insensibility to danger, apparently, an unconsciousness of fear. Besides that, he possessed an evenness of judgment to be depended upon in sunshine and in storm.' Napoleon said, 'The rarest attribute among generals is 2 o'clock-in-the-morning courage.' No better description could be given of the type of courage which distinguished General Grant. In his services in the field he never once exhibited indecision, and it was this quality that gave him his crowning characteristic as a military leader. He inspired his men with a sense of their invincibility and they were thenceforth invincible."

These glowing tributes to Grant's genius and success as a military leader are fully supported by the record of his career all through the Civil War, particularly when he was present with the Army of the Potomac. It has been said in a preceding chapter that previous to his promotion to supreme command of the National forces, the army in the East had been under the leadership of five different generals between 1861 and the spring of 1864, and during that period an army of 159,000 Union men had been consumed without the attainment of any immediate or significant result. Antietam had been fought in Maryland between 87,000 Union troops under McClellan, and Confederate forces



variously estimated at from 45,000 to 70,000; but Lee was permitted to recross the Potomac, and to invade Pennsylvania the following year and bring on the desperate struggle at Gettysburg. There, between 70,000 and 80,000 were engaged on each side, and although it was a Union victory, Meade gave Lee a week or more in which to retreat across the Potomac, and later, to defy the Union forces to meet him in battle on Virginia soil.

However favorable at the time may have been the moral effect of Lee's retreat from Antietam and Gettysburg, it seems that it was only temporary, for in the winter of 1864 there was widespread unrest in the North, and much anxiety in Administration circles in Washington regarding the condition of affairs on the Potomac. At the time Grant was called to the East, the Union cause in that department was not more hopeful than when General McDowell marched to Bull Run to meet inglorious defeat at the hands of General Beauregard, July 21st, 1861, in the first hard fought battle of the war.

Some writers have charged Grant with "dogged pertinacity" in rushing his men into battle regardless of conditions; but they seem to forget that before he could cause the downfall of Richmond or compass the final overthrow of Lee's army, he had as sanguinary battles to fight as had ever been fought in any part of the great field of the Civil War; and that he lost 15,000 fewer men in bringing the war to an end than were sac-



rificed during the previous three years in the fruitless attempts to crush the Army of Northern Virginia.

When Grant went to the East at the urgent request of Lincoln and Stanton, it was to whip Lee and make him stay whipped. On this point the Comte de Paris says Grant had to be invested with the supreme command before the ideas of the President and the Secretary of War yielded to the principles of sound strategy. The Army of the Potomac had never before seen such a hard and determined fighter as Grant. In this connection it must be borne in mind that whether great losses in battle are justified depends upon the results obtained. Grant lost 124,000 men from the time he entered the Wilderness to the capture of Lee's army at Appomattox. But not in a single battle during those eleven months did he take one step backward. Every movement he made took him nearer the accomplishment of his supreme purpose—the saving of the Union.

It has been said by an unnamed writer on the campaign in Virginia, that Grant did not fight battles merely to win victories or to kill the enemy's soldiers, but to capture the opposing army and remove it from the field of hostile action; "and in this object he was conspicuously successful, even as compared with Napoleon. When Grant fought a battle he intended it should be a Waterloo, and that the army which opposed him should never fight him again. In this respect he was a Cæsar."



Lee's opinion of Grant as a commander is related by General James Grant Wilson. Shortly after the war, when an unfriendly critic referred to Grant as a military accident whose success had been won through a combination of fortunate circumstances, Lee answered: "Your opinion is a poor compliment to me. We all thought Richmond, protected as it was by our splendid fortifications and defended by our army of veterans, could not be taken. Yet Grant turned his face to our capital, and he never turned it away until we had surrendered. Now I have carefully searched the military records of both ancient and modern history and have never found Grant's superior as a general. I doubt if his superior can be found in all history."

Apply to Grant what test you may; measure him by the magnitude of the obstacles he overcame, by his indomitable will and ceaseless energy, by the peculiar methods he adopted in fighting his battles, by the achievements of his illustrious co-workers, by the sureness with which he directed his marvellous force to the vital point which was the key to the vast field of operation, by the fame of the antagonist over whom he triumphed, and is it any wonder that such a military genius and brilliant and daring strategist made the Vicksburg siege the greatest in history, that the most dramatic battle of the Civil War, or of any war, he won at Chattanooga, that he finished the war at Appomattox, and the last great scene in the tragedy of the Rebellion filled the world with his fame?



John Fiske, the distinguished philosopher and historian, says Grant "possessed very high qualities; the combination of self-reliant, fertile resources and vigor in action was perhaps never more perfectly realized than in his wonderful campaign in the rear of Vicksburg. He was invariably patient and equable in temper in the most trying circumstances, neither elevated by success nor cast down by ill-fortune. For dogged persistency he has never been surpassed; . . . and if there were anything especially difficult for him to endure it was the sight of human suffering, as was shown on the night at Shiloh, where he lay out doors in the icy rain rather than stay in a comfortable room where the surgeons were at work. Although in spite of some shortcomings, Grant was a massive, noble, and lovable personality, well fit to be numbered as one of the heroes of a great nation."

Thus is characterized a commander who was never allured by military glory, and who never manifested a military spirit. It has been truly written of him, notwithstanding he was the greatest warrior of his time, that he was above all things else a lover of peace.

Finally, with the same genius and high purpose with which Lincoln administered the office of President, Grant, as commander-in-chief of the army, conducted all his campaigns to subdue rebellion. Lincoln was the guiding force in the darkest days in American history, and Grant was the hope and inspiration of that army which had volunteered to risk their lives for a



righteous cause. Grant never took a step backward. From first to last he was conqueror. Under the most desperate conditions he held himself together as with a chain of steel. He had "the most extraordinary military temperament the world has ever seen."

In all the centuries from Cæsar to Napoleon there has not lived a warrior who so beautifully and completely manifested the God-given spirit of tenderness and magnanimity toward a fallen foe as Grant. As commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, he not only displayed the characteristics of genius, but the most modest and lovable traits of character; and thus measuring him by what he accomplished in four years of war and what he was in purity of purpose and charity for those over whom he was victor, he will ever remain "singular and solitary" the Man of Mystery, one of the grandest characters in all history.



## XXXVII.

### A REMARKABLE HOME-COMING.



IN the summer of 1865 Grant was the one man upon whom the eye of the nation was focused. The kindness shown him by individuals, associations, corporations, and Congress, was heart-warming. An incident which pleased Grant greatly was his visit to West Point in June, 1865, where he met General Winfield Scott, under whom he had served as a lieutenant in the Mexican War. As I have stated in a previous chapter, the veteran general said of Grant during the Civil War: "I remember him as a young lieutenant of undaunted courage, but giving no promise of anything beyond ordinary ability." But at the meeting at the Academy in 1865, Scott, being then seventy-nine, presented to Grant a copy of his *Memoirs* which bore the inscription: "From the oldest to the greatest general."

The gifts bestowed upon Grant were numerous, and included a gold medal by Congress, swords, honorary



titles, horses and carriages, money, and houses. The citizens of Galena gave him a beautiful house, ready for occupancy, which occupied one of the most picturesque and charming situations in the city. The Union League of Philadelphia presented him with a furnished house which cost \$30,000. And his friends in New York gave him one hundred thousand dollars as a token of their appreciation of his great services to his country.

But the gratitude of the people was not limited to the bestowment of gifts. Receptions were tendered him by many cities in the East, South, West, and in Canada. In Montreal, New York, and Chicago he was greeted with unbounded enthusiasm. But in his journeyings he did not forget the little village of Georgetown, Ohio, where he spent nearly sixteen years of his boyhood. Here he made an address composed of eighty-two words, a longer speech than he made in any of the large cities he visited.

But the most significant of all the General's receptions during that summer was at Galena, which he had not visited since he was commissioned colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois in June, 1861. It is doubtful if there can be found in the history of man a more expressive or important home-coming than his visit to the little lead-mining city on the 18th of August, 1865. The metropolis of the lead district of the West had had many golden days in its history, but it had never had an event compared with that of August 18th.



The contrast between the darkest and coldest night of winter and the warm and delightful sunshine of a summer's day is not greater than that between the departure of Captain Grant from Galena for Springfield on April 26th, 1861, with a company of volunteers in which he held no position of rank, and the return home of Lieutenant-General Grant after the war. What mighty things he had accomplished in the brief period between his departure in 1861 and his return in 1865! In forty-eight months he had made more history that will be read with thrilling interest, than was ever made by man in so few years.

This once humble townsman, to all appearances without a definite or high purpose in life, had leaped into fame more rapidly than any military leader in the annals of war. In less than three years he had risen from a copying clerk in the Adjutant General's office in Springfield, to the supreme command of a million of men, divided into many great armies and operating over an area as large as the empire of Germany and Austria combined. It was this remarkable fact that gave to the home-coming of Grant extraordinary interest and enthusiasm.

With exultant pride, Grant's fellow-townsmen left nothing undone to give him a fitting welcome. It was only yesterday—so short did the time seem—that he departed from the city, with a small carpetbag in hand, an unknown man, to seek a position in which he might be of service to his country. To-day he returns by



special train, luxuriously equipped, and is greeted with the cheers and plaudits of a vast throng of his fellow-citizens. Yesterday he left for Springfield, so lacking in personal influence that he was in a wilderness of doubt as to how Fortune would behave toward him. To-day he brings home a record of service written highest on America's roll of military fame.

People came by the thousands from all parts of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin—and even from other states—to join in the great demonstration. Business was largely suspended in the city. Flags were flying everywhere. Banners bearing appropriate devices were displayed in many places. A triumphal arch spanned Main Street, which bore the inspiring motto, "Hail to the Chief who in Triumph Advances." On the platform were thirty-six beautiful young women dressed in white, each waving an American flag, and each having a bouquet to fling at the General as he passed under the arch.

It would be futile to attempt to describe adequately the stirring scene when the unobtrusive little man ascended the platform in company with many distinguished friends. The moment was a severe trial to one so retiring and bashful as Grant. The facing of such a multitude in his home-town, and the thunder of applause, which was long-continued, seemed to bewilder him, and he blushed like a school-girl. When silence was restored, Mr. Elihu B. Washburne gave the address of welcome; but the man who could save a nation could



not express his feelings to such an outpouring of people at such a time, and it was arranged that the General's former pastor, now Bishop Vincent, should speak for him in response to the address of Mr. Washburne.

Music and addresses closed the exercises on the platform in the afternoon, and in the evening a reception was given at the custom house. Many thousands could see the General on the platform or in the carriage as he rode through the streets, but it was a physical impossibility for all who wished to shake hands with him to have their desires gratified. Only those who were fortunate enough to get a position not far from the entrance of the custom house, early in the evening, and could endure being jammed as tightly as if squeezed in a vise, had the pleasure of personally greeting the conquering hero. I had the privilege of attending four receptions given to Grant—the one at Galena, and three others after his journey around the world, but his homecoming seemed to touch him most deeply. This should cause no wonder. He was then on the scene of his hard and last struggle with misfortune and failure before the Civil War. He was fresh from the field of the great American conflict, in which he had risen with amazing rapidity from what seemed hopeless obscurity to world-wide fame. And on this occasion he was subjected to the constant gaze of his proud and admiring neighbors as well as of thousands of the curious from far and near. The circumstances and surroundings in this case appeared to impress him more peculiarly and pro-



foundly than any other reception at which I had met him.

In the evening it was announced by someone in the receiving circle that the ex-soldiers and officers to be presented to the General should give their names and commands. Early in the reception, an officer who had met him in the war, and who immediately preceded me in the line, gave his name and regiment, and on being presented, was at once recognized by the General. A beam of pleasure seemed to possess his face, but this was only momentary; for when the officer blurted out, "General, this is a proud day for you; you are having a grand ovation," Grant's countenance suddenly became serious and bore the aspect of weariness; and in a modest tone, mixed with embarrassment, he responded: "The people are very kind to—," but the sentence was not finished, the line was pressing hard upon him, and thus it continued until his weariness made it necessary to end the reception at an early hour.

Grant could never be made joyful by the blandishments of sycophants, or by those who sought to shower him with praise for his service to his country. He was a lover of simplicity and hard sense, and had never manifested elation over any victory. It is doubtful if Horace Porter, John Russell Young, Bishop Vincent, or anyone else who saw much of him, either in a great campaign or at any notable function given in his honor, in time of peace, ever knew him to exhibit a spirit of self-gratulation. Even at the magnificent review in



Washington, at which, by virtue of his high rank and many victories, he should have been the central figure, he walked with some members of his staff from the headquarters of the army to the reviewing stand in front of the White House, and to all appearances was not more than a spectator at the brilliant military pageant—an event made possible by his successful generalship.

Grant was now the most popular man in America, and invitations to accept the hospitality of municipalities came from many parts of the land. It was his wish to visit certain parts of the Northwest, and a railway company generously tendered him a special train with which he was privileged to make any excursion he desired; and in this tender there was no restriction placed upon the number or character of his guests.

The real Grant was manifest in the choice of his company on this excursion. Bishop Vincent says the General did not take into account wealth or social position. He chose as his guests old friends and comrades who had been kind and faithful to him in the days when he was obscure and poor. Of such men and women was the company composed which joined him on the excursion; but among all the guests there was none so unassuming, or who gave so little evidence of personal pride, as Grant himself. Wherever the excursion went he was received by an enthusiastic multitude. From beginning to end it was a triumphal march. He could not say much when called on for a speech, but another spoke for him. He was to be seen



and not heard; and seeing him was to see the greatest one-man power in the realm of arms the nineteenth century had produced.

Grant's control of his emotions, his never-failing modesty, his trustful simplicity, and the constancy with which he pursued the noiseless tenor of his way will always be a mystery. It was always his wish—so far as he was personally concerned—to travel in a manner free from any appearance of ostentation. A story is told that when he was going northward in the autumn of 1864 (presumably in the latter part of September, to make a brief visit to his family at Burlington, N. J.), he wore clothes of the common sort; and when a news-boy entered the train and called out, "Life of General Grant," an aide suggested to the boy that he might "sell one to the gentleman over there"—pointing to the General. Going to the man, who wore no insignia of rank, the young vendor of papers and books said: "Life of General Grant, mister? New Life of Grant?" The General, in an indifferent tone, wanted to know "who is this all about?" With much indignation the boy replied: "You must be a darned greeny not to know who General Grant is." The General surrendered, and bought the book.

Grant had no desire for brilliant functions or noisy demonstrations; and it was observed frequently when he was travelling in a finely-equipped coach that he would generally leave his private car to go to one forward and smoke and talk with strangers.



Reviewing Grant's life from the time he became famous as a commander to the close of his remarkable career, it is not inappropriate to apply to him what Emilio Castelar said of Lincoln, in the Spanish Cortes: "He was the humblest of the humble before his own conscience, the greatest of the great before history."



## XXXVIII.

### GRANT AND THE PRESIDENCY.



AT the close of the war, and after the death of Lincoln, Grant was the first citizen of the Republic. Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, became involved in a bitter quarrel with Congress over his reconstruction policy, and sought to use Grant's unbounded popularity as a make-weight in promoting his plans. The General refused to become involved in political dissensions, and gave his whole strength to the work of disbanding the army, repressing disorder in the South, and restoring normal conditions throughout the region desolated by the war.

In August, 1867, President Johnson suspended the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, the only member of Lincoln's Cabinet remaining in office, and appointed Grant secretary *ad interim*. It was a most delicate and trying position, and could not but bring about disagreeable complications. Grant made sincere and earnest efforts to discharge his duties in a fair and



unpartisan manner, and when ordered to remove General Sheridan, he made a definite attempt to check the President in his insane and disastrous policy, which was rapidly alienating the loyal people of the North; but finding himself misunderstood on all sides, he relapsed into his usual silence. The following January the Senate refused to sanction the suspension of Stanton, and Grant at once surrendered the office.

When the convention called to nominate a Republican candidate for the Presidency met in Chicago, May 20th, 1868, only one name was presented. After the roll-call, amid boundless enthusiasm, the chairman announced: "Gentlemen of the convention, the roll is completed. You have 650 votes and you have given 650 votes for Ulysses S. Grant." In accepting the nomination Grant declared his purpose to execute the will of the people without laying down any policy that he would invariably follow, and closed with the famous words, "Let us have peace."

During a strenuous campaign, the opposition resorted to every means to discredit him and made the most virulent attacks upon his personal character. Grant remained silent and took no part in the campaign. He retired to his little home in Galena, received his friends, drove and walked about the streets, took tea and chatted in the most familiar way with his neighbors, and seemed totally unconscious of the fact that he was the central figure in one of the great political struggles of the century.



While he had reason to say some sharp things against the peculiar policy of President Johnson, Grant confined his action in this matter to a few lines in a letter to Mr. E. B. Washburne, which are as humorous as they are pointed. Congress adjourned in the latter part of the summer, and the letter was written September 23rd:

"I feared the effect of legislation at this time, and then, too, if Congress had remained in session it would prevent A. J. from taking his proposed trip to East Tennessee. I have as much affection for him as Frank Blair had for the 'Finnigans,' and would go just as far as Frank was willing to go to see him off, and would hold out every inducement to have him remain."

Grant was elected by an overwhelming majority, and he entered upon the duties of his high office on March 4th, 1869. The best evidence of his fitness for the place and the success of his administration, was that at the end of his term it was felt to be absolutely necessary for the continued stability of the government and the prosperity of the country that he should be continued in the executive office.

It is difficult in a few pages to review the eight years of his administration. Questions of the greatest importance, upon which the wisest and most patriotic men differed, were up for discussion and settlement, and in many cases he was compelled to make the final decision. All untrained in matters of civil administration, he came to the head of a government whose very existence had been threatened throughout four years of civil war, and which had been torn by dissensions dur-



ing the stormy administration of his predecessor. That he should make mistakes was inevitable. Trained in military affairs, it was natural that he should think of his official advisers as members of his staff, and choose them for personal rather than political reasons. If Lincoln erred, it was on the side of mercy; and if Grant fell into error while President, it was because of his loyalty to his friends. It is possible that at times he might have been somewhat blinded by his friendships. He could not forget those who had been kind to him in his days of adversity. His great Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, says of him: "His knowledge of men was generally accurate; but he was apt, in this respect, as in others, to reach his conclusions rapidly, and was thus not infrequently led to give his confidence where it was not deserved; and it was from the abuse of his confidence, thus reposed, that arose most of the censure which, after the close of the war, was visited upon him." But he was sincere, patriotic, incorruptible, and straightforward, and the people trusted him. Whatever the criticisms in smaller matters and details of administration, when it came to great questions upon which the peace and prosperity of the country depended, he saw as by an unerring instinct through all sophistries to the heart of the matter, and stood like a rock against the selfish schemes of individuals or the clamor of the unthinking crowd.

Of all the public men who opposed Grant, Charles Sumner was the most virulent. In a bitter speech, de-



livered in the United States Senate, May 20th, 1872, he charged the President with having turned the White House into a military headquarters. But the fact is that at the time Sumner made the attack on Grant, there were only three officers in the White House—Colonel O. E. Babcock, Colonel Frederick T. Dent, and Colonel Horace Porter—who had served on Grant's staff during the war, and were then on Sherman's staff, and were detailed at the White House for clerical duty. They loved Grant as did all the officers who served with him; and to assist the President was a labor of love, for neither one of them received one cent of compensation beyond his pay as an officer of the army.

A finer illustration of Grant's simplicity in public life and his perfect freedom from a military spirit, cannot be found than that given by United States Senator Matthew H. Carpenter in a speech delivered in the Senate on the 3rd of June, 1872. In answering Sumner's charge of militarism, Mr. Carpenter said:

"When Grant took possession of the White House, it was patrolled by sentinels day and night; so was the War Department; so was the residence of Mr. Seward. The first night Grant slept in the President's House, after retiring he heard the tramp of soldiers in the hall below, and presently the command, 'Halt! Order arms!' and the crash of muskets on the floor. The General, not knowing what it meant, ran down stairs to ascertain the cause. There he found an officer in command of a squad of soldiers, and on asking an explanation, was informed that it was the night guard of the Executive Mansion, which for a long time had been stationed there every night. But General Grant informed the officer that he could take care of himself, and ordered him to take his soldiers to their quarters. He waited till his



armed friends had left, then locked the door and went to bed. The next day the whole business of sentinel service was discontinued, and not a soldier has been on duty at the White House since."

Speaking of Grant as President, that most judicial observer of men and things, Dr. Andrew D. White, says of him: "As to General Grant, I believe now, as I believed then, that his election (reëlection) was a great blessing and that he was one of the noblest, purest, and most capable men who have ever sat in the Presidency. The cheap, clap-trap antithesis which has at times been made between Grant the soldier and Grant the statesman is, I am convinced, utterly without foundation. The qualities which made him a great soldier made him an effective statesman. This fact was clearly recognized by the American people at various times during the war, and especially when, at the surrender at Appomattox, he declined to deprive General Lee of his sword, and quietly took the responsibility of allowing the soldiers of the Southern army to return with their horses to their fields to resume their peaceful industry. These statesmanlike qualities were developed more and more by the great duties and responsibilities of the Presidency. His triumph over financial demagoguery in his vetoes of the Inflation Bill, and his triumph over political demagoguery in securing the Treaty of Washington and the Alabama indemnity, prove him a statesman worthy to rank with the best of his predecessors. In view of these evidences of complete integrity and high capacity, and bearing in mind various conver-



sations which I had with him during his public life down to a period just before his death, I feel sure that history will pronounce him not only a great general but a statesman in the best sense of the word."

When we speak of the welfare of the country we are in the habit of using the two words, Peace and Prosperity. No act was ever more fruitful in securing the first than the Treaty of Washington, which averted war with England and secured the peaceful adjustment of the Alabama Claims by arbitration; and prosperity was never more effectively promoted than by Grant's financial policy, which prevented an inflation of the currency and secured the resumption of specie payments. Enormous public debt, and depreciated and irredeemable currency, were among the legacies of war. Demagogues stood ready to tempt the people with schemes of inflation and repudiation. Grant set his face determinedly against them. His veto of the Inflation Bill proposing to reissue fifty millions of greenbacks which had been retired, came at a critical moment and turned the scales against depreciated money. In that one act he did more than all the other public men of his time to defend the Nation's faith, maintain the national credit, and prepare the way for resumption. With all his alleged incapacity for business he had broad ideas of financial and political economy and a rugged sense of business integrity, which were of inestimable service to his country in days of storm and stress. John Fiske thought that for the vetoing of the



Inflation Bill in 1874, and his consistent advocacy of the Resumption Act which passed in 1875, Grant should be given as high credit as for any of his great victories in the field.

As an illustration of the methods of President Grant and the working of his mind when great questions were up for consideration, we have this testimony of Hamilton Fish, who was so closely connected with his administration:

"In his cabinet meetings he was free to accept the opinions and views of the members, often antagonistic to his own preconceived notions. As an instance of this, when the inflation bill had passed Congress, and was strenuously urged upon him for approval by many of his most influential friends in each house of Congress, and by a majority of his Cabinet, he at first reluctantly yielded to a determination to approve the bill, and prepared a paper to be submitted to Congress, explaining his reasons for approval of the bill. . . . I had most strenuously advocated his vetoing the bill, and an evening or two previous to this Cabinet meeting, he sent for me and read me the paper. Having done it, he remarked: 'The more I have written upon this, the more I don't like it; and I have determined to veto the bill, and am preparing a message accordingly.'"

It is interesting to turn from his acts as President to his sympathy and regard for men against whom he fought in the war. Ex-Confederate General Longstreet had been one of the guests at Grant's wedding in 1849. Not forgetting their warm friendship in those days, and knowing that the ravages of war had made him a poor man, Grant offered him the position of Surveyor of the Port of New Orleans. There was trouble in the Senate as to the confirmation of the appointment, and



Longstreet, not wishing to embarrass the President, wanted him to withdraw his name; but Grant said: "Give yourself no uneasiness about that. The Senators have as many favors to ask of me as I have of them, and I will see that you are confirmed."

Mrs. George E. Pickett, wife of General Pickett, who led the fatal charge the last day at Gettysburg against the Union forces, writes of the tender memories she had of Grant. She called upon him with her husband while he was President. Grant knew that his old comrade of West Point had been made a poor man by the war and he offered him the marshalship of Virginia. While sorely needing help, he appreciated the heavy draft made upon the President by office-seekers, and said: "You can't afford to do this for me now, and I can't afford to take it"; but Grant instantly replied with firmness, "I can afford to do anything I please that is right."

Grant is often called "The Silent Man." While he wrote with fluency and with great rapidity, it was difficult for him to express himself extemporaneously until after his Presidential career, and many interesting stories are told of his attempts to talk. A large body of ministers once called upon him and made a long address, to which he was compelled to reply. After a sentence or two, Mr. Fish noticed that his voice faltered, and fearing that he might be at a loss what to say, the Secretary, standing next to him, caused a diversion by beginning to cough violently. The President after-



wards said to Mr. Fish, "How fortunate it was for me that you had that cough, as I had felt my knees begin to shake. I do not think that I could have spoken another word."

The following anecdote is told by General Jacob B. Cox in his military *Reminiscences*:

"He (Grant) sometimes enjoyed with a spice of real humor the mistaken assumption of fluent men that reticent ones lack brains. One day during his Presidency he came into the room where the Cabinet was assembling, laughing to himself. 'I have just read,' said he, 'one of the best anecdotes I have ever met. It was that John Adams, after he had been President, was one day taking a party out to dinner at his home in Quincy, when one of his guests noticed a portrait over his door, and said, "You have a fine portrait of Washington, Mr. Adams!" "Yes," was the reply, "and the old wooden-head made his fortune by keeping his mouth shut"''; and Grant laughed again with uncommon enjoyment. The apocryphal story gained a permanent interest in Grant's mouth, for, although he showed no consciousness that it could have any application to himself, he evidently thought that keeping the mouth shut was not enough in itself to ensure fortune, and at any rate was not displeased at finding such ground of sympathy with the Father of his country. Grant's telling the story seemed to me under the circumstances infinitely more amusing than the original."



It is not necessary to multiply words in further commenting on Grant's statesmanship. In the period of his public life he is best judged by what he accomplished, and by estimating the difficulties which beset his presidential career. In considering great national questions, he was a great President. Some people were hot headed for war with England on account of her delay in settling the Alabama claims; but Grant promoted arbitration to the utmost of his power, which resulted in peace and goodwill between the two nations and placed in our national treasury \$15,500,000 in gold, in full settlement of the claims. He was first to give political impetus to the movement for civil service reform. During his administration the public debt was reduced \$450,500,000. The internal revenue taxes were lowered \$300,000,000; and the balance of trade was changed from \$130,000,000 against this country to \$130,000,000 in our favor. The Special Payment Act showed the wonderful strength of our public credit; and when it went into effect on the first of January, 1876, it made no more disturbance in financial circles than would the falling of the dew in the physical world.

What the country needed at the beginning of Grant's administration was a President who would acquire the regard of a large portion of the Southern people without forfeiting the confidence of the Northern people; a statesman of nerve, of wholesome temperament, of rare judgment, and of endurance, to stand at the helm of the Ship of State. Grant was that man.



## XXXIX.

### THE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD.



IT now became possible for Grant to carry out a long cherished plan of a trip around the world. By disposing of some of his property he would be able to travel as might the ordinary citizen of moderate means, and the trip was begun in May, 1877, with Mrs. Grant, two sons, Frederick D. and Jesse R., Mr. Borie, and John Russell Young, as companions. As the *Vandalia* sailed from Philadelphia, the party was saluted by a vast crowd of people and accompanied down the harbor by a small fleet.

One of the greatest surprises of Grant's life was the enthusiastic welcome given him on his arrival in Liverpool. He was greeted at the custom house by a great throng of English citizens eager to grasp his hand, and he was still further amazed to be presented by the Mayor with the freedom of the city.

The journey to London was a constant ovation, the people crowding to meet him, delighting to do him



honor. Especially was this so in Manchester, where he was lodged in the town hall and made the guest of honor at several large gatherings. On the morning after Grant's arrival in London, he was introduced to the Prince of Wales; but his formal presentation to London society was at a reception given by Minister Pierrepont, June 5th.

The late Mr. Jesse Seligman of New York, the well known banker, was a warm personal friend of Grant, and he says that when the General arrived in London, Mr. Pierrepont handed him a copy of the speech the Lord Mayor intended to deliver at the welcome ceremony, so that the General could prepare a proper reply.

But Grant said: "Keep it away from me, for I won't be able to say a word unless I do it spontaneously." He spoke spontaneously, and it is said to have been the best speech he ever made.

The exact social status of Grant in English society had been difficult to determine. After much discussion it was agreed that he should be received as an ex-sovereign, he to make first visits on members of the Royal family, and all other Englishmen were to yield him precedence. This was practically the view taken by the other countries and carried into effect more punctiliously in them than in England, where a more impulsive man might have made serious trouble at the disregard of the agreement shown by the Royal family.

On June 15th, the freedom of London, the highest honor that could be given him by the corporation of



that city, was conferred upon him. This was but the beginning of attentions paid him in all parts of the kingdom and by all classes of people. Honored as a guest by the Queen and the Prince of Wales, complimented by people of high rank, constantly fêted and flattered by society, he was also claimed as a friend by workingmen, who greeted him by thousands as he went his way up and down the country. To these he was the supreme revelation of democracy, where a man humbly born, without the accessories of wealth or social position, could, by his own worth, come to be ranked among the rulers of the world.

Those who were of his immediate party fully realized how much of the pleasure of the trip came to him through such informal meetings with the common people as could be arranged, and how irksome to him were many of the more formal functions of society; but wherever he went he was master of himself and equal to the occasion. American newspapers, regardless of personal feelings and prejudices, recorded the events of his journey with pride.

Grant's itinerary took him to the principal cities of the British Isles, the Continent, Egypt, Palestine, Siam, Burmah, India, China, and Japan. Each in its peculiar way did him honor.

While visiting Milan, in the spring of 1878, Grant was invited to review the flower of Italy's army—the pride of all, the flying Bersaglieri. The officers brilliantly uniformed, the horses finely decorated and



grandly caparisoned, and the immense crowd gathered to witness the scene, made the spectacular affair one of peculiar interest. Another marked feature immediately preceding the review, was furnished by three grooms who were using all their strength to restrain a beautiful high-spirited, plunging horse. A partial description of the review is taken from an article written for a magazine by Captain Alfred M. Fuller, Second United States Cavalry.

“Presently Grant appeared from the hotel—a stranger to the Italian officers, and a surprise to them because of his modest manner and plainness of dress. After being presented to the officers, an escort led the General to the restless horse, which the three stalwart grooms had found such difficulty in managing. It was the horse Grant was to ride in reviewing the flower of the Italian army! He looked with admiration on this restless animal which had never been ridden. Suffering from a severe stiffness in the right leg, Grant was assisted on to the saddle by two officers while the three grooms held the horse. So soon as he touched the seat, however, he grasped the reins, his form straightened, and the change in his appearance immediately so impressed those around with his thorough horsemanship, that spontaneously a shout of applause went up from the crowd. The horse, after a few futile plunges, discovered that he had his master, and started off in a gentle trot. From that time on, horse and rider were as one being. For two hours, most of the time with his



horse at a gallop, Grant kept both mounted and foot troops on the move. . . . Murmurs of wonder and admiration came from his escort, on their return. They themselves looked much fatigued, but the General appeared as calm and unruffled as if he had been seated in a rocking-chair."

From Mr. Young's journal and from the chronicles of the daily press a very interesting study of social life may be made. There were occasional complications requiring in their settlement tact and diplomacy, as in France, where Grant had incurred the displeasure of many of the people by his attitude in the Franco-Prussian war; but difficulties were adjusted and he was most cordially received by President McMahon, and spent several weeks in Paris. Berlin interested Grant more than any other city in the Old World except London. Because of a recent attempt on the life of the Emperor he was in retirement, and the most notable person whom Grant met was Bismarck, who paid him every attention, entertaining him at his own home.

It is interesting to note some of Grant's impressions of Rome and Venice. Pictures and statuary did not interest him. He liked the cathedrals, the public buildings, and the castles, but most of all he wanted to see the people at their work. At St. Petersburg the General's party was met by the emperor's aide-de-camp, and the following day Grant met his Imperial Highness, Alexander. Some apprehension had been felt over this visit, and Grant had been advised against going to



Russia, because of the unpleasant circumstances connected with the Russian minister in Washington at the time of the visit of Prince Alexis to the United States in 1872; but the General was received with the utmost cordiality by the Czar.

In Spain the General was received as a great commander. The one great pleasure of this visit was the meeting with Señor Castelar, the ex-President of Spain, the one man in the country whom Grant really desired to see. In Portugal the King desired to present Grant with the grand cross of the Tower and Sword, but the General refused, considering himself debarred from its acceptance by the law concerning the receiving of decorations from foreign countries.

The trip to India was preceded by a return to London and a visit to Ireland. The city of Dublin received him most enthusiastically and presented him with the freedom of the city. He replied, "I am by birth a citizen of a country where there are more Irishmen, either native born or the descendants of Irishmen, than there are in all Ireland. I have therefore, had the honor and the pleasure of representing more Irishmen and their descendants than the Queen of England." It had required not a little ability, tact, and *savoir faire* to respond fittingly to the many greetings at the public gatherings and to meet graciously the many types of men that crowded around him, but each day had added to the fame of Grant and increased his prestige. Especially was this true in the East. By tempera-



ment and training Grant had that poise of mind, that clearness of judgment, that quiet intentness of purpose that appealed to these more reserved peoples, and they welcomed him as a friend. Of his reception in China he writes: "My reception by the civil military authorities of China was the most cordial ever extended to any foreigner, no matter what his rank. The fact is, the Chinese like America better, or, rather, hate it less, than any other foreigners. The reason is palpable; we are the only power that recognizes their right to control their own domestic affairs." Of Hong Kong he says: "This is really the most beautiful place I have yet seen in the East. The city is admirably built, and the scenery most picturesque."

Japan impressed him very deeply and he speaks of his reception there as exceeding anything preceding it, and further he says that Japan is beautiful beyond description, and the people most interesting; expresses wonder at the marvellous evidences of progress and clearly discerns that the nation was coming to a consciousness of its strength.

At Japan Grant's journey through every foreign land had come to an end. On the 3rd of September, 1879, he and his party embarked on the *City of Tokio*, at Yokohama, for San Francisco. The Grant who departed from San Francisco in 1854 and the Grant who returned to the same city in 1879, form perhaps the greatest contrast known in human history. The sighting of the *Tokio* on the 20th of September was the sig-



nal of a marvellous demonstration. The pealing of bells, the booming of cannon from the forts, and the steaming down the harbor of hundreds of gaily decorated vessels bearing thousands of guests who sent up a rapturous cheering, can give only a faint idea of the joy and enthusiasm of the occasion.

The sun had set below the waters of the sea when the General was escorted to the Palace Hotel. The procession was one of the grandest ever seen in San Francisco. Although night had come on, the streets had the appearance of meridian splendor. The receptions and other honors given to the General were continued for several days. The city could do no more to honor its guest, and very few in any land could have done as much. Practically he had seen all the world, but there was one spot which this man of splendid achievements and of simple manners desired to visit before leaving the Pacific Coast. He accepted the invitation to make a brief stay at Vancouver, Oregon, where the Fourth Infantry, of which he was quartermaster, had been located in 1853. He was delighted with the visit, and on the 14th of October, 1879, standing on the very spot where the old barrack had been located, he made an address of two hundred words in response to the soul-stirring welcome of the citizens.

While journeying homeward the train made many short stops that the people might see and cheer the General, and Chicago was reached in time that he might attend the annual meeting of the Army of the Tennes-



see, November 12th and 13th. Preparations had been made for his reception. Like all other receptions given him, no matter on what continent, it was nonpartisan. The city was elaborately decorated with banners and flags, and thousands upon thousands of people occupied windows, stands, and side-walks to catch a glimpse of the man whom republics, kingdoms, and empires had delighted to honor.

Grant reached Philadelphia December 12th, 1879, thus ending his journey around the globe in two years, six months, and twelve days. It was a remarkable tour. The fame of his romantic and singularly successful career as a soldier had preceded him into all countries, and great curiosity to see him existed everywhere. As an ex-President of the United States he was received with distinguished honors, official and social, in every country which he visited in Europe and Asia. Cities presented him with addresses and officially offered him their freedom; and great throngs of people attended these ceremonies, curious to see the great American commander. It was because of such occasions, and these and other public receptions, that he saw more people "from kings down to lackeys and slaves than anybody who ever journeyed on this earth before."

All in all, Grant's tour around the world surpassed, in many unusual features, any triumphal tour, however magnificent, ever made by any other man in the entire history of the human race.



## XL.

### GRANT'S LAST AND GREATEST VICTORY.



WHEN Grant finished his world's tour he was nearing his fifty-eighth year. The most exalted military and political positions had been bestowed upon him by his own country, and sovereigns and statesmen of Europe and Asia had received him with the highest honors. The world could give nothing more that would add to his fame. He had reached the summit of human distinction.

The General had been in his homeland but a few weeks before he gratified a cherished desire to visit Cuba and Mexico, which was done in the winter of 1879-80, and everywhere in his journey he was welcomed with extraordinary demonstrations. He had seen all the world as the saying goes, and afterwards was glad to visit Galena, where he could have the companionship of his old friends and enjoy a season of rest.

Early in 1880 a quiet movement was begun to make Grant a candidate for the Presidency. It was thought



by those who were persistent in favoring the third-term idea, that his remarkable tour of the world would give him a prestige that would lead to victory in the convention which was to meet in Chicago in June. That astute politician and powerful leader of men, Roscoe Conkling, was a prime factor in the movement. Attempts were made to draw the General into active canvass, but his good sense and firmness prevailed. He was never actuated by improper ambition. When his friends and supporters tried to get him to commit himself to the movement, he went only so far as to say that he would "neither accept nor decline an imaginary thing." But when he was pressed hard to give a definite answer, he said:

"I owe so much to the Union men of the country that if they think my chances are better for election than those of other probable candidates, I cannot decline if the nomination is tendered without seeking on my part."

When his name was presented by Roscoe Conkling, it was followed by one of the wildest scenes ever enacted in a national convention. There was a traditional sentiment against a third term, and although a majority of the convention were the General's warmest friends, they could not consistently vote for his renomination. The contest was long, bitter, and full of excitement. His vote never fell below 302 and never exceeded 313. For nearly thirty-six ballots his vote was 306; but defeat came at last, and James A. Garfield was nominated. As



a memorial of the loyalty of those who were pledged to vote for Grant from the beginning to the end, an iron medal was struck and given to each of the faithful 306. Grant was not disappointed over his failure in the convention. His most cordial support of Garfield was the characteristic generosity of a great man.

After the expiration of Grant's second term as President, he had no place which he could regard as a permanent home. While he owned a house in Galena—the gift of friends—he could not decide to spend his remaining years in the little western town which his name had made famous, neither could he conclude to occupy the beautiful residence given him by the Union League of Philadelphia. Through the munificence of his patriotic friends, Grant had received much in money and houses; but on his return from his tour abroad he was not a man of large means. The spirit of independence was bred in Grant, and when it was proposed that he and his family should tour the world it was his purpose to pay the expense himself, which amounted to upwards of \$25,000. While the General cared little for money and knew nothing of the art of making it, he realized that something more than the ordinary income from any investments he could make would be necessary properly to support his family.

For a man of his temperament, love of sociability, and business activity, Grant believed that New York was the better place in which to establish a permanent home; and besides this, he was firmly of the opinion



that the city offered him a more favorable opportunity to invest wisely his little fortune. Therefore, in August, 1881, he bought a house near Central Park, and became a citizen of New York. It was about this time that several of his friends in New York raised a trust fund of \$250,000, the interest on which should go to Mrs. Grant.

Grant's love for his family was one of the strongest and most attractive traits of his character. He never failed to appreciate the worth of his mother's love, patience, and wisdom during his early years at Georgetown. When she died in 1883 at Jersey City Heights, New Jersey, the General, when at the funeral, said to Dr. Howard Henderson, her pastor: "In the remarks which you make, speak of her only as a pure-minded, simple-hearted, earnest, Methodist Christian. Make no reference to me; she gained nothing by any position I have filled or honors that may have been paid me. I owe all this and all I am to her earnest, modest, and sincere piety."

Schiller says: "Disappointments are to the soul what a thunder-storm is to the air." Grant's removal to New York was the beginning of the end. Had it not been for his misfortunes, we would never have known the entire greatness of his character. As I have said on a previous page, Grant greatly desired to live a life of business activity in the city. To manage his financial affairs so that his income would meet the demands of the household, was a necessity. Colonel William Con-



ant Church says: "No one could flatter Grant by calling him a great soldier . . . but when a Wall street sharper sought to persuade him that he and his sons were great financiers, or at least that his sons were, he found a listening ear." It was not difficult, therefore, to induce the General to become a special partner in the banking firm of Grant & Ward, and all his property, accumulated since the war, was invested in the bank, the management of the institution being almost completely in the hands of Ward.

Everything went on pleasantly and successfully with Grant in his life in New York, until Christmas Eve, 1883. He had been visiting some friends, and in stepping from the cab at his residence he slipped on the ice and sustained a severe injury of the thigh which caused him intense pain. The same heroic patience with which he combated the painfulness of a sprained ankle in the stormy Sunday night at Shiloh, and the severity of the injury he received in being thrown from his horse in New Orleans shortly after the fall of Vicksburg, was manifest in the accident in New York. His distress and lameness were long continued, and while he was able to travel a little some weeks afterwards, his usual bodily activity was greatly impaired.

Another and still greater misfortune quickly overtook the General. In May, 1884, while he was yet a sufferer from the injury of the thigh, he learned that through the unblushing frauds of Ward the firm of Grant & Ward was on the verge of bankruptcy. At the



suggestion of the junior member of the firm, Grant was induced to apply to William H. Vanderbilt for a temporary loan of \$100,000 to save the institution from absolute ruin. Mr. Vanderbilt, being an intimate friend of Grant, promptly gave him a check for the amount wanted. But matters grew worse, and in a few days the firm with which the name Grant was connected, was hopelessly wrecked.

Any effort to describe Grant's disappointment at this time would be feeble indeed. It was the hardest shock to his sensibilities he had ever received. That the name of Grant should be associated with the frauds by which the bank went down in the vortex of destruction, almost "cost him his grip on life." Everything was gone, even the gift of \$250,000 to Mrs. Grant. But there were two elements in Grant's nature—courage and integrity—which no financial disaster could destroy. Speaking of these dark days in the General's life a writer in the *Macmillan* says: "Here we see an intrepid soul which refused to be crushed even when all of his little world stood around him in ruins." And in the *North American Review* are found three sentences worth quoting: "Neither responsibility, nor turmoil, nor danger, nor pleasure, nor pain, impaired the force of his resolution. . . . What did the obligations, the temptations, the sorrows, the struggles of life make of this man? One of the truest, bravest, strongest human entities the world has ever produced."

When all his investments were lost he went to Van-

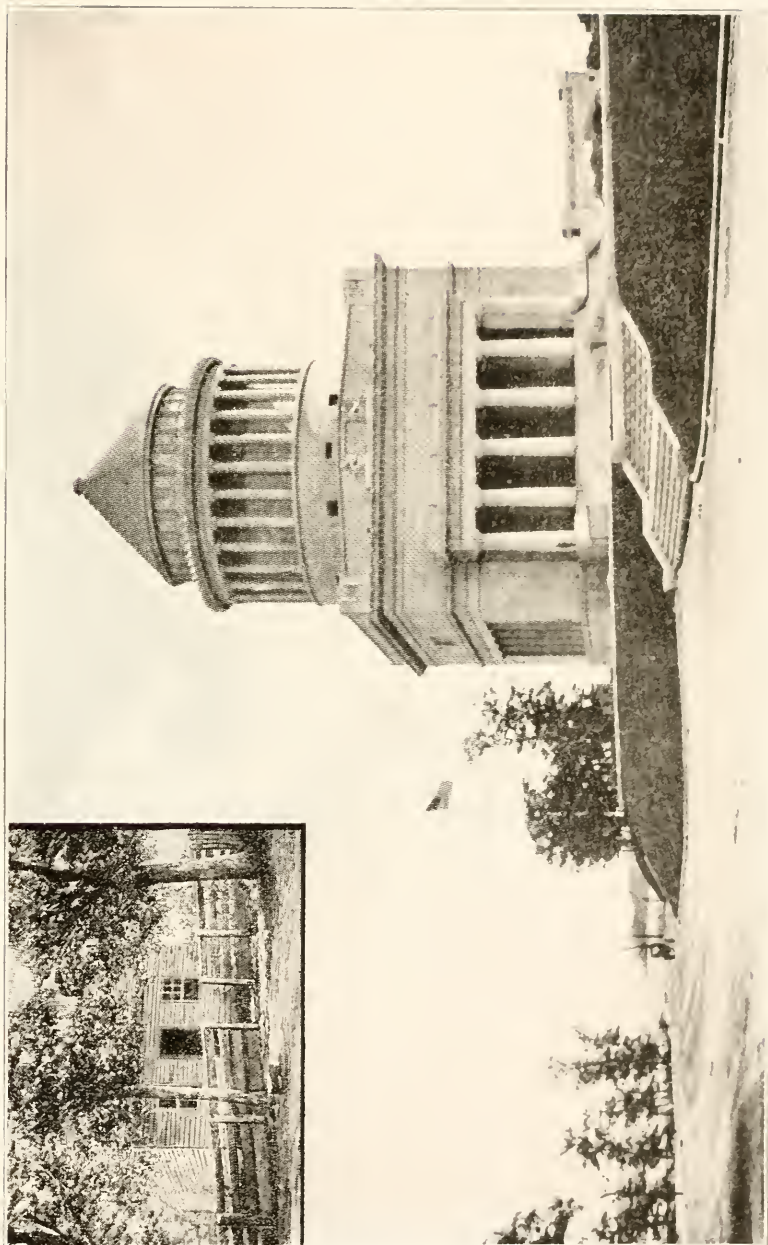


derbilt and deposited with him as security for the loan of \$100,000, the entire collection of gold-hilted swords, gold-headed canes, medals of rare value, costly paintings, especially prepared documents, and many other tokens of friendship presented to him by the different cities, governments, and nations of the wide world. But Mr. Vanderbilt did not hold this priceless collection as security. He soon afterwards returned them to Mrs. Grant, and ultimately they were deposited in the National Museum at Washington.

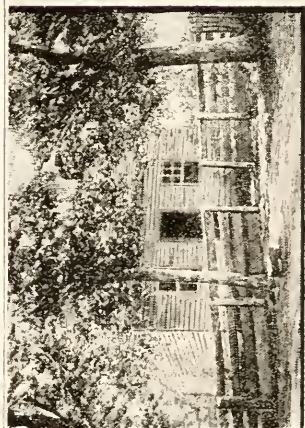
In June, 1884, broken in fortune and in health, he took up the battle for bread. When the Century Company repeated an invitation, which he had once declined, to write a magazine article on Shiloh, he consented, and entered upon a new kind of work with great ardor. He was teaching the world that the pen was mightier than the sword. So satisfactory was the result that he was asked to continue and describe the capture of Vicksburg. Then at the solicitation of publishers he set about writing the story of his life; and turning his back upon the business and political world, he addressed himself to his task, in which he found solace for his woes, the promise of competency for his old age, and support for his wife should she outlive him.

In the autumn of 1884 he complained of pain in his throat, and difficulty in swallowing. These steadily increased and greatly interfered with his work. After a time he found it impossible to take solid food, and gradually grew weaker until he was confined to his





THE MAUSOLEUM.



THE CABIN.







house. His friends in Congress, after one failure, succeeded in March, 1885, in passing a bill restoring him to his rank of General in the Army, with full pay, but it was too late to awaken interest or give pleasure, except as the money would be of service to those he loved. He was face to face with a relentless foe and all his mighty energies were absorbed in the contest. For a time he lost interest in his book. One volume was finished, and the second begun. On the 10th of March an examination of tissue was made, revealing cancer of the throat. As the word was flashed around the world, the tide of appreciation and sympathy, which had ebbed during his misfortunes, returned in a mighty flood. All criticisms were forgotten, and prayers were offered throughout the land for his recovery. The first crisis in the great struggle came on April 5th. So apprehensive were his physicians that they did not leave the house. In the early morning they were summoned, and to all appearances their distinguished patient had come to his last hour. Dr. Newman, his pastor, was summoned and administered baptism. His physicians gave him a hypodermic treatment and he soon showed marked signs of improvement. A little later he expressed a new interest in life, and said: "I want to live to finish my book."

His improvement was now rapid and marvellous, and with his new lease of life came the determination to complete his great task. In commenting upon his return of courage, Dr. George F. Shrady, the chief of his



medical advisers, says: "He resolved to face the enemy, trusting to adapt himself to new conditions. It was this discipline that was necessary to the few working days left to him. The only relief in the situation was to make the most of the remaining opportunity and stubbornly persist to the end. He admitted the fact and bravely trudged along under marching orders."

On his last Easter vast crowds gathered in front of the house, and merely by their silent presence, showed their interest and sympathy. He dictated a message to the American people, expressing his gratitude and closing with the words: "I desire the good will of all, whether heretofore friends or not." That desire was answered to the full, and even Jefferson Davis sent a message of condolence. As the warm weather came on, a change was necessary, and his friend, James W. Drexel, placed his cottage on Mount McGregor at the General's service. On June 16th he left the city, took the train up the Hudson, looked for the last time at West Point as he swiftly passed and recalled the day when, as a youth of seventeen, he first beheld it. In due time he reached Mount McGregor and found a little comfort in the clear, fresh air and the fine views. But his enemy gave him no rest and the great battle went on without a moment's cessation. Two days after his arrival at the cottage he wrote on a card these pathetic words: "It is just a week to-day since I have spoken. My pain is continuous." But this did not cause his pen to lag. It is said that he composed more matter in the



eight weeks following the first of May, 1885, than in any other eight weeks of his life. During the two months prior to his death he wrote fifty pages of the book in as many days. On the first of July, he worked continuously four hours, and on the second, three hours. At last the great task was completed. The battle was won. The mighty spirit had held the dying body in control until he had concluded his story and provided for the future of those he loved better than life. There was nothing now but to give a few last messages to those who called, and through them to the world. A company of Mexican journalists who came to pay their respects was cordially received, and even though he could not make a whisper, he wrote a message full of wisdom and promise for their country. He was greatly cheered by a visit from General Simon B. Buckner, his antagonist at Donelson. After a hearty greeting from his visitor, Grant wrote: "I appreciate your calling highly. I have witnessed since my illness just what I have wished to see since the war; harmony and good will between the sections. We now look forward to a perpetual peace at home and a national strength which will secure us against any foreign complications." As the days passed on he grew steadily weaker, and in the early morning of July 23rd, 1885, surrounded by his family and his faithful physicians, the great commander quietly breathed his last.

Such a funeral as America had never seen—unless we except Lincoln's—was accorded to this quiet man



who cared so little for display. At the central scene the body was accompanied to its last resting place by a roll of drums, the thunder of guns, and the tramp of marching hosts, while North and South clasped hands over the precious dust. Throughout the land, over town and country-side, the people gathered to express their gratitude, honor, and affection for the great warrior who, more than any other, had secured to this nation the incomparable gift of peace.

Thus we have followed through all the varied phases of his wonderful life, Grant, the Man of Mystery. We have watched the quiet, humble, unpromising citizen of Galena, as he emerged from obscurity at the call of his country, in a few months to become, through a succession of marvellous achievements, the greatest military chieftain of his day, to command all the armies of the United States and be entrusted with the gigantic task of subduing the greatest of rebellions led by the most gifted of commanders. We have seen him for eight years at the head of a nation, during the trying period of reconstruction, after the awful devastation of four years of internecine strife. We have followed him in his unparalleled journey around the world, which, begun as the quiet holiday of a private citizen, was turned into the triumphal march of a conqueror, as he was greeted and honored by princes, statesmen, and peoples of the realms through which he passed. We have seen him go down into his valley of humiliation, stripped of his property, deserted by many who fawned upon him in



prosperity, jeered at by his enemies, temporarily forgotten by the people he had served, and at last smitten by a terrible and incurable malady. We have seen him emerge, bearing the marks of his suffering, and exchanging sword for pen, hold his great enemy at bay while he wrote the story of his wonderful achievements, the world looking on in astonishment and sympathy. When the task was finished, he laid down his pen, and the invincible spirit went forth to join the company of the immortals who before him had fought the good fight and kept the faith.

Over his mortal remains has been erected the most imposing memorial structure on the Western Continent. His name and memory will be enshrined in the hearts of his grateful countrymen while the Republic shall endure. We may well say of him as Milton said of Shakespeare:

“And, so sepulchred, in such pomp doth lie,  
That kings for such a tomb might wish to die.”



































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